

# MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

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## The Prince and the Piker

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE—MYSTERIOUS OLD CHINA WHISPERS  
A SUMMONS TO A LONE WOLF OF YOUNG AMERICA  
TO LEAD HER ARMED PACK TO A ROYAL KILL

By George F. Worts

HE was a figure of mystery from the hour the *Vandalia* steamed away from San Francisco. Hardly were the Farallones astern when he made his appearance on deck, wrapped in a handsome steamer rug of Macdonald plaid, and stretched out on his back on a steamer chair on the sunny side of the promenade deck.

His curly, light-brown head was bare to the breeze, his intensely blue eyes were gazing off dreamily over the glittering sea. With his air of aloofness there was a note somehow romantic that aroused one's curiosity.

The good-looking stranger spent his time reading books and dozing. He evinced no interest at all in those about him. When some one chanced to look in his direction, he deliberately looked in another.

It was the young man's evident intention to have social contact with no one. He appeared to be that rarity among ocean travelers, the person who had firmly made

up his mind to avoid all communion with his fellows and to devote the entire voyage to catching up with his reading.

It was observed that he obtained for himself in the dining saloon a table for two at which no one else sat. He ate his meals leisurely, with a book propped up in front of him.

At luncheon, one young lady, who had been gazing at him from time to time across the room, passed close to his table on her way out, and made a business of ascertaining the nature of the book in which he was so engrossed. But as she passed by, it chanced—or perhaps it was by design—that he maneuvered the book in such a way that she could not see the title on its blue cover.

During the first three days at sea, most of the passengers were engaged in getting their sea legs and making one another's acquaintance. By that time almost everybody knew almost everybody else; but no one, it appeared, had so far exchanged a

single word with the mysterious, good-looking, romantic young man.

On the fourth day out of San Francisco, the *Vandalia's* passengers began to comment upon his selfish, unsocial conduct. He was, obviously, not that familiar sea-going personage, the ship's grouch, and it was almost as certain that he was not the type of young man who eschewed the company of others because of a shrinking, violetlike nature.

He had a charming, easy smile, as various observers noted. This smile came and went freely as he was reading, and it also was noted that his eyes twinkled and gleamed with fun—when he was reading.

His name, it was learned from the ticket on his steamer chair, was John Murray. His destination was Shanghai.

Mr. Murray might have gone all the way to China unmolested if he had not happened to be the kind of young man that people like to talk to and be with. Presently the ship was alive with rumors about him.

It was said that he was in the diplomatic service, and was on his way to Peking in the capacity of a *chargé d'affaires*. Others seemed to possess evidence that he was a big game hunter, and was on his way to Mongolia to bag some rare specimens.

But it was noteworthy that, whatever their nature, the flavor of the rumors was always one of romantic adventure—perhaps because he was quite apparently a romantically adventurous young man.

Particularly did he pique the curiosity and stimulate the imagination of Sally Banning. Miss Banning was a traveler of considerable experience; it could almost be said that she was a hardened traveler, except that the word hard in any application somehow did not suit her. She was a slender, pretty, soft little thing, with large, appealing brown eyes, and a smile that was simply too delicious to describe.

But Sally Banning was not nearly so unsophisticated or unworldly wise—or worldly unwise—as her appearance indicated. She had made the startling discovery that men are far more interesting than girls, and she had gone even farther than that and had discovered that handsome, healthy, romantic-looking young men are far more interesting than homely, unhealthy, unromantic-looking young men.

It was only natural, therefore, for Sally to select, by a process of elimination, the

aloof young man who was going to China as an object worthy of her interest. His aloofness tickled her feminine inquisitiveness and made him much more interesting than if he had started to trail her, nice-doggy fashion, as most men did, once she had been clearly seen by them.

Yet more than merely this served to heighten and fire her curiosity. She had seen him before! Three times in the Maxfield Parrish dining room of the St. Francis Hotel she had observed him dining alone, and on these occasions his interest in her had been anything but aloof.

At first sight of Sally Banning, when their eyes had met across intervening tables, he had looked at her with no uncertain approval. When she had danced with the young man with whom she was dining, the stranger had followed her wherever she went, with eyes that seemed to yearn for her.

Oh, yes, they had yearned for her! Sally knew that yearning look when she saw it.

On the second occasion he had smiled when he had seen her—the naughty, delightful kind of smile a young man can give to a perfectly nice girl without offending her—if he knows just how to do it.

And on the third occasion he had blushed. He had! She had seen the tide of crimson bloom like a flower in his face; and she knew by that that he had been thinking about her a great deal since he had seen her last.

Even then he had piqued her curiosity and stimulated her imagination. She knew he wasn't a motion picture actor, because she knew them all. She was sure that he was something much more romantic and exciting than a movie star.

Now, as the *Vandalia* plowed its way over lazy sapphire seas, she was bewildered, a little hurt—and fairly quivering with excitement. Why was he ignoring her so—and who was he? She gave ear to all of the interesting rumors which were being bruited about, and she tried, without sacrificing her modesty, to attract his attention.

On the first day out she looked his way perhaps a dozen times. Not once did he meet her eyes.

She looked at him perhaps three dozen times on the second day out. Indeed, every time she passed his steamer chair she glanced in his direction, and not once this day did he meet her eyes. He seemed to



he studiously avoiding her, as he also ignored everybody.

By the morning of the fourth day, Sally was rather desperate. She had thoroughly looked over all of the young men aboard, and among them all there was only one who appealed to her—the aloof and romantic young man who was bound for Shanghai.

That morning, soon after breakfast, when she and her father were taking their customary twenty-lap, after-breakfast constitutional, John Murray looked up as she swung past. She was so startled by this departure from his rule that she stared into his eyes a good deal harder than she had planned to.

Then she walked on with the feeling that he had looked at her and not seen her. Either that, or he had seen nothing in her face to interest him.

Sally carried away with her an impression of bright blue, bored eyes that had glanced on indifferently to something else. Just as soon as the turn of the deck concealed her from him, she whipped out her vanity case and peered demandingly into the little mirror it contained.

She left him cold, did she? Well, for the life of her she could not see why. She knew that she was beautiful; Heaven knows, enough men had told her that.

Her cheeks were pink from the breeze. A glance into the mirror, in short, convinced her that she was looking her best.

Why, then, had she left him cold? Men generally stared at Sally, and, having stared, they stared again—or kept on staring. They discovered, if they stared efficiently, that she had a lovely slender figure and perfect legs, very slender at the ankles, as they should be, and beautifully rounded at the calves.

"I wonder," she said aloud, "who that chap is?"

"My dear child," Mr. Banning replied, bringing his thoughts back from a fascinating railroad merger upon which they were enjoying themselves, "I tell you, for the twentieth time, I do not know. I never saw him before. If you are so curious, why don't you walk up to him and put it to him bluntly."

"His name is John Murray," she enlightened him.

"It stirs a vague memory," her father remarked, "but so do a lot of names."

"I do wish you'd find out who he is," she pouted.

"You do your own man-hunting," he said with the rudeness that is a father's occasional privilege.

Sally relapsed into silence. They continued around the deck. Several men looked at her wistfully as she passed, but Sally was serenely unaware of their existence. She prepared herself for her next encounter with John Murray's eyes as they proceeded up the starboard side.

With a few feet to spare before they would be abreast of him, she exclaimed:

"Oh, dad, I've lost my vanity case!"

Mr. Banning grunted.

"I thought I saw you toss it onto the rug on your steamer chair," he suggested.

"Oh, did I, darling?" she gasped.

They passed on. Sally was nipping her pink under lip with exasperation. John Murray had not glanced up; he had remained utterly absorbed in the book he held in his hands.

"I think," Sally's father got out between gritting teeth as they rounded the turn of the deck, "that that was pretty rough. My God, Sally, you are becoming positively brazen. Never in my life have I ever seen anything so obvious, so bold!"

Sally gave him her pert smile.

"Then why do you make it necessary for me to resort to such crude measures?" she demanded. "Why don't you take the matter into your hands like a man and introduce me to him?"

"But good Lord, honey, I don't know the man from Adam!"

"Humph! If he was in what you quaintly call the railroad game, you'd be blowing each other's noses long before this!"

"Why are you so determined to meet a man who shows plainly as words in electric lights a yard high that all he is asking is to be left alone?"

"Because he looks interesting, and I want somebody to talk to! You don't know how deathly it is looking at women all day long who just sit there and knit. And you know very well that before another day is over you're going to be with that poker gang in the smoke room sixteen hours a day. What is going to become of me then, poor thing?"

"What was the matter with that blond young fellow who came over last night and asked you to dance with him?"

"Lord!" Sally exclaimed. "Do you mean to say you didn't notice his teeth?"

"I'll have to say I didn't. What was wrong with his teeth?"

"Awful. Simply awful!"

"I suppose this Murray's teeth are perfect."

"They are. They are beautiful teeth—white and even and large. I like large teeth in a man. I don't mean the kind he trips over when he talks!"

"Well, what was wrong with that first officer? It looked to me as if he was willing to be pretty attentive."

"Good night, dad; didn't you see his hands?"

"I'm afraid I didn't. Were they revolting?"

"Horrible. Simply horrible! They gave me the creeps."

"Not like this Murray's hands, eh?"

"I should say not! He has wonderful hands. I think he may be an artist."

"It seems to me you're mighty finicky about men. What was wrong with that red-haired wireless operator with the fascinating freckles?"

"Didn't you see him talk?"

"How do you mean—didn't I see him talk?"

"He blows bubbles when he talks. He is a human shower bath!"

"And I suppose this Murray's conversational habits are perfect?"

"Why not?"

"Look here, Sally, have you fallen in love at first sight with this strange young fellow?"

"Please don't be medieval, dad. I simply want to meet him and talk to him. I know he's on some romantic mission or other, and I know he is entertaining."

"How do you know that?"

"By his nose. He has an extremely interesting nose. Don't tell me you missed his nose! It is independent and intelligent without being too intellectual."

"Not a highbrow nose?"

"Oh, no, just an entertaining nose. And I am simply dying to meet him. Please, dad, fix it!"

When Sally said, in that sweet, endearing young voice, "Please, dad, fix it!" her stern father generally weakened.

Mr. Banning weakened now. He uttered a faint groan.

"Very well. I'll talk to him. I'll do my best to arrange this disgraceful introduction—if he doesn't freeze me out."

She hugged his arm.

"Darling," she cooed, "the colder they are, the quicker they thaw—for you!"

"He's probably a pretty tough nut," Mr. Banning muttered.

"Why, daddie!" she exclaimed. "The nut hasn't been grown that is too tough for you to crack!"

"Well, I must say," he groused, "that I think it's pretty thick, chasing after a man like that!"

"Dad, I am not chasing after him. I only want some one to talk to, to while away the hours, and he looks interesting. That's all."

"Just another victim, eh?"

"I have never made false representations to any man," Sally nobly declared. "This is going to be a romantic trip, and I want every nickel's worth. These aloof ones are always more interesting than the gabby ones who crash the gate the first hour out."

"I haven't had much experience dealing with these romantic fellows," Mr. Banning said, "but I'll do my best. Relax yourself in your steamer chair. If I can land him I will bring him around, and you can have the pleasure of removing him from the hook!"

"Don't play him any longer than necessary," she adjured. "The livelier they are kicking, the better I like them."

## II

THE young man with the aloof manner and the educational nose was immersed in his book when Mr. Banning, continuing around the deck alone, fetched up at the foot of his steamer chair.

Now it is more than likely that Colton A. Banning would not have been the president of the Southern and Pacific Central Railroad if he had not possessed certain qualities of fearlessness. He was the sledge-hammer type of man who crashes through an obstacle where another man would have essayed to talk or walk his way around it.

When Banning made up his mind on a course of action, he bludgeoned his way through to the bitter end. The gentler side of his nature was enjoyed exclusively by Sally, who was this fighting old widower's only child, the joy of his heart and the apple of his eye.

He was prepared, having made the decision, to take this young man, if necessary, by the scruff of the neck and toss

the fellow in a heap at his daughter's adored feet.

The steamer chair on the left side of the young man was empty and standing a yard away. Mr. Banning pushed it across the intervening space and sat down.

He looked frowningly at the title on the cover of the book that appeared to exert such a fascination upon the young man. The title was:

#### PRACTICAL PLUMBING

"I see," Mr. Banning said, in a firm, aggressive voice, "that you are interested in plumbing."

The young man did not look up at once. He read two or three lines more, and then glanced away from the page as if with the greatest reluctance.

He gave Mr. Banning a look that was cold and forbidding; it could almost have been called a repelling look. But to Mr. Banning it might have been so much meat pie.

"I am," he replied sharply, and again riveted his eyes to the type.

"It's a whopping big subject," Mr. Banning stated with determination.

This time the young man did not even trouble to lift his eyes from the type. With rapt gaze he read on and on.

"I say," Mr. Banning repeated emphatically, "it's a whopping big subject."

Still the engrossed young man ignored his attempt at driving in the conversational wedge.

"That's a good book you've got there," the railroad man declared in tones too loud to be ignored.

The young man gave him a quick glance.

"I know it; I wrote it," was his devastating rejoinder.

But his glance lingered. It seemed to imply that if Mr. Banning wished to debate the point, he was only too willing to go to the mat with him.

"If you wrote it," the railroad president said bluntly, "why do you have to read it?"

"Because it fascinates me."

Still his blue gaze lingered on Mr. Banning's face, and still the willingness to battle lingered in it.

"You've been reading that book over and over for four days now," the railroad president pointed out.

"Better than that," the young man informed him. "I've been reading it over

and over ever since I left New York ten days ago."

"I should think you'd know it by heart."

"I virtually do, but it still fascinates me," the author said in a gentler tone.

"If I ever wrote a book," Mr. Banning remarked, "I am pretty sure I wouldn't be caught dead with a copy of it on me. But then I am a modest man."

"No more so than I," said the author of "Practical Plumbing." "But if you had written a book that was intended to have a distribution of a thousand copies, and the demand was so great that a half million had to be printed, you would wonder why it had happened, wouldn't you? Are you interested in machinery?"

"Certainly!" said Mr. Banning.

"Well, if you saw a piece of machinery working and you couldn't figure out what was making it go, you would be curious, wouldn't you? And you wouldn't be satisfied till you found out, would you? Well, I wouldn't, and that's the way it is with this book. Just enough power was put into it to put across a thousand copies—and here it goes five hundred times farther than I had figured. And I want to know why. If I could solve that problem I would have the secret of success—or something closely approaching it, wouldn't I?"

"Well, yes and no," Mr. Banning admitted.

The author looked at him rather fiercely.

"Say, look here," he demanded, "are you one of these yes-and-no men?"

"Certainly not!" the railroad magnate asserted indignantly.

"Well, I'm telling you I dashed this thing off as a piece of publicity for the Paramount Plumbing Products Corporation. I'm their publicity director. I did it during office hours. I dictated it right along with letters and ads and house organ stuff."

Mr. Banning looked at him critically.

"Is this your first book?" he inquired.

The young man did not answer at once. He licked his lips as if he had tasted something bitter in his mouth, and answered, in a low, throbbing voice, "Yes, it's my maiden effort."

Mr. Banning leaned earnestly toward him.

"And you can't guess why it's so successful?"

"No, I can't," the other returned. "Can you?"

"Certainly I can! It's because you have power. You have the gift, or the ability, or call it what you will, to make a dry subject gripping and fascinating. There's nothing mysterious about it. Take that chapter on brass plumbing."

The eyes of the author glowed.

"Do you mean to tell me," he gasped, "that you have read this book?"

"Have I read it!" the railroad president exclaimed. "I couldn't put it down. I always have a book or two handy to put me to sleep, and when I saw this title, I was sure that here was a book that would do the trick every night for at least a month. Instead of which, I stayed up nearly all night reading it. I missed a directors' meeting next morning because I overslept. If you could make a book on plumbing as interesting as this, think what you could do with a subject like railroads! Take that chapter on brass plumbing—"

So they took it. Here, by all the visible signs, was the beginning of one of those beautiful friendships.

The Vandalia rose and fell gently as she hurtled through diamond-sparkling, sapphire seas toward Honolulu, Japan, and China. Hours trickled away.

Presently a steward with the resigned face of a clay Buddha trod about the decks belaboring a large brass gong.

"Now you take the old Roman bathroom," Mr. Banning was eloquently saying when he saw Sally scooting up the deck toward him, her lips parted and her eyes glistening. His heart sank.

He had forgotten all about his daughter. He had been going to bring this fascinating young man around to meet her. He would never hear the end of this.

The young man had risen. He was smiling down on Miss Banning, but there was a queer, furtive look in his eyes, as if, even now, he might run away.

"Dad!" Sally exclaimed breathlessly.

"Honey," her father began, in wheedling tones, "cross my heart, I didn't realize—"

"Did you know," she pantingly interrupted him, "that Jordan Ames Holburn is aboard this ship?"

"Who," grunted the baffled railroad monarch, "is Orden James Boldurn? Sally, I want to present—"

"Holburn!" Sally again broke in on him, and she appeared to be growing more and more excited. "Don't you know who Jordan Ames Holburn is? He's the man

who wrote 'Incorruptible China.' He's one of the greatest adventurers that ever lived! He started a revolution in China a couple of years ago. He—"

The girl became conscious then of the presence of John Murray. She flushed a deeper red, and hesitated.

"We've got a good enough author right here," her father announced. "Sally, I want to present Mr. Murray to you—Mr. John Murray. This is my daughter, Mr. Murray. Mr. Murray is in the plumbing game."

Sally's gaze was vague. She hardly seemed to hear her father, so excited was she over her own news.

"Plumbing?" she repeated in a bewildered voice. "Are—are you a plumber?"

"Not exactly a plumber—that is, a practicing plumber," the young man stammered.

"He has written the greatest book on plumbing that has ever been published," her father said enthusiastically. "It has sold over a half million copies."

Sally gazed up into the tall young man's romantic blue eyes.

"Really?" she breathed. "Don't you think it's simply thrilling that Jordan Ames Holburn is aboard?"

"He really is aboard?" the expert on plumbing asked dutifully.

"That's what every one is saying," Sally thrillingly told him. "Did you read his book, Mr. Murray?"

"Oh, yes, I read it."

"Weren't you simply carried away by it?"

"Yes, I thought it was a first rate job."

Mr. Banning was fidgeting. He liked this young man exceedingly, and he wanted Sally to like him. It had been a long time since he had met a youngster with such a good, level head on his shoulders, and it was plain to him already that Sally, in that flighty way of hers, had already lost interest in him and was in pursuit of another will-o'-the-wisp. He had caught the word "revolution."

"Oh, anybody can start a revolution in China," he said sourly. "All it takes is a little ingenuity. Chinese revolutions are selling at so much a dozen, F. O. B., Hong-kong."

"Well, I'm so thrilled I can hardly breathe," Sally gurgled. "They say he is in seclusion in Suite A, and that he hasn't appeared on deck since we left San Fran-



cisco. People have seen stewards taking food to his room, but he never comes out. Let's go down to luncheon, dad, and ask the captain."

She linked her arm through her father's and guided him swiftly down the deck, leaving John Murray licking his lips as if he had tasted something bitter.

### III

CAPTAIN BALLISTER looked at Sally with twinkling, mischievous eyes. He had placed her in the seat on his immediate right, the seat of honor at his table, and not entirely because she was the daughter of one of California's most important multimillionaires.

"Jordan Ames Holburn?" he repeated. "You mean the fellow who set China on its left ear a couple of years ago?"

"That's the one," Sally replied.

"Well, what about him, my dear?" the captain wanted to know.

"He's on board this ship, isn't he?"

Silence fell about the captain's table. If it was a rumor, Captain Ballister would spike it.

"You'd better ask the purser," was his disappointing answer. "I have nothing to do in an official capacity with passengers, unless it's necessary to put them in irons—or marry them."

"Who," asked a Standard Oil man, who seldom opened his mouth except to put food into it, "is this Holburn?"

A half dozen voices promptly enlightened him. Jordan Ames Holburn had been a newspaper man in northern China. He had written a book aimed at the new power in China, which was corrupt before its wings were fairly sprouted.

Many attempts had been made on his life. He had escaped through southern China by attaching himself to a tea caravan that was traveling over the old merchants' trail from Chung-King to Farther India.

He was probably the most striking figure of the present age, barring war heroes. He had assumed countless disguises, had been royally entertained by the mandarins of walled cities, and had disseminated much royalist propaganda before he had slipped into India and vanished.

"What has he been doing since?" the Standard Oil man asked, but no one at the table could tell him.

"Well," said the oil man, practically,

"who started the rumor that he was aboard this ship?"

"I overheard a steerage passenger say so—that tall, white haired, picturesque old man," Sally replied stoutly.

"Then it's just a steerage rumor."

"But who," Sally demanded, "is in Suite A? Captain, who is?"

Captain Ballister only shook his head. He wasn't in the least interested. Or, anyhow, he conveyed that impression.

As soon as luncheon was over, Sally went to the purser's office. The purser reminded Sally of a comic strip character. His Adam's apple was fascinating.

"Suite A?" he repeated, and gulped.

"Well, now—" He hesitated, stammering, blushing; and Sally's suspicions were immediately fanned to white heat.

"His name is Jordan Ames Holburn, isn't it?" she suggested in the most matter-of-fact tone she could command.

"Well, now—" the purser gulped. "A Chinese gentleman— But— Ah—"

"I don't see what there can be so mysterious about it," Sally burst out. "Jordan Ames Holburn is not a Chinese gentleman. He is an American newspaper man. And he is in Suite A, isn't he?"

"Well, now, really, Miss Banning—"

Perceiving that no useful information was obtainable in this quarter, Sally hastened back on deck. Suite A, she discovered, had two entrances, one on the starboard side of the promenade deck and one on the corridor that ran athwartships with the music room on the forward side.

Both of these doors were closed, and the lattice-like shutters over the two windows were raised. Even though the windows were open, it was impossible to glimpse the interior.

She now saw, to her chagrin, that John Murray, the romantic-looking authority on plumbing, was gazing at her over the book in his hands. His face wore a faint, mocking grin.

He was reclining, not far away, on his steamer chair, and Sally hesitated, undecided whether to talk to him or to carry on her investigation of an absorbing mystery. Behind that shuttered window was one of the most romantic, adventurous, daring, most interesting men alive.

Jordan Ames Holburn! The very name thrilled her. She had never seen pictures of him; none, that she could remember, had ever been published, yet in her imagi-



nation she saw him — Jordan Ames Holburn, in a sun helmet and the khaki clothing of a war correspondent, Jordan Ames Holburn in the disguise of a mandarin which he had employed in many daring adventures in southern China.

She imagined again his steely, penetrating eyes, his fierce mustache, spiked at the ends. He must have a fierce mustache! How thrilling it would be to see China through his eyes!

As for John Murray, she had had experience before with technical experts. How they loved their subjects! How they adored to go on about them by the hour! Picture her harking to the inside facts on plumbing all the way to China!

And yet John Murray did intrigue her. There was something about him, something within him, that called to her, and she wanted to respond.

Suddenly, as she stood beside the windows of Suite A, a voice sounded. It was a rich, deep, melodious bass voice, and it was singing a snatch of an old Chinese song, in English. Thus it ran:

"I ask, 'Is it evening or dawn?'  
And the mango bird whistles, 'Tis spring!"

Sally was trembling all over. The voice stopped as suddenly as it had begun. She waited, as if poised for flight, then saw that John Murray had thrown the steamer rug from his legs and was planning to rise.

She didn't want the spell broken by a dissertation on modern plumbing. Mango birds and bathroom fixtures! Hastily she left the spot.

And John Murray, looking after her, once more moistened his lips as if he had tasted something bitter.

#### IV

SURROUNDED by the glittering paraphernalia of his craft in a structure on the top deck of the *Vandalia* that somewhat resembled a dog kennel, except that it was larger, Bub O'Day, the senior wireless officer, nimbly moved the pencil in his hand over a pad of radiogram receiving blanks.

The message that was trickling through the ether to his sensitive ears bore a New York date line, and was addressed to John Murray, aboard the *S. S. Vandalia*, at sea. The message read:

According to clause three of your contract you were not to leave America within two years without written agreement. Regret that we cannot

accept your explanation received this morning from San Francisco. Your violation automatically severs your relations with this concern.

PARAMOUNT PLUMBING PRODUCTS CORPORATION.

O'Day changed his switches to the transmitting position and ticked off on the heavy nicked key an O. K. to the powerful San Francisco station through which the message had been relayed. He put the message in an envelope, sealed it, addressed it, and reached for the button which would summon a steward.

His freckled hand came back from the button without having touched it. He had not removed the head phones from his ears and the San Francisco station was calling him again with another message.

He recovered his pencil and began to write. The origin of this message was Washington, D. C., and it was addressed to Jordan Ames Holburn, *S. S. Vandalia*, at sea. It said:

Explain specifically by return radio why you disregarded our request. Under no conditions will you be permitted to enter China.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

Bub signaled his O. K. and rang for the steward. When his summons was answered, he sent the steward to the purser's office for the passenger list, and when this was delivered to him he scanned it carefully. The name Jordan Ames Holburn was not there.

Ordinarily Bub O'Day did not deliver messages which came over his instruments for passengers; he delivered them only when his curiosity was aroused. His curiosity now had been piqued. It had, in fact, been intrigued twice.

He put the two envelopes in his pocket, removed his cap from a hook, descended the narrow steel ladder at the after end of the boat deck, and was presently making inquiries of a deck steward as to the whereabouts of Mr. John Murray. Having obtained this information, he proceeded briskly up the promenade deck to where John Murray was reclining in his steamer chair.

It chanced that Murray was sitting alone and that no one was near him. Such passengers as were not enjoying their siestas were on the port side watching a game of shuffleboard.

"Are you Mr. John Murray?" O'Day inquired, respectfully touching his cap.

"I am," the plumbing expert replied, smiling up at him.

"I've got a radio for you," said Bub, which was short for Bubbles, a name given him because of an eye-chaining conversational habit, already mentioned, to which he was addicted when excited.

Bub gave him the message and waited. He studied John Murray's face with intense interest as the handsome young man tore open the envelope, removed its contents, and read the message.

Murray betrayed not the slightest concern. He crumpled the radiogram into a tight ball and tossed it neatly over the rail and into the Pacific Ocean.

Then he looked up with twinkling eyes at the waiting wireless operator. O'Day was staring at him with round, inquisitive eyes, but this did not appear to annoy the authority on plumbing.

"Is there any answer, Mr. Murray?"

"There is. Have you got a blank in your pocket?"

"No, sir, but if you wouldn't mind drop-pin' up to the spark shack you can write it there. Nobody's supposed to go up there, but it's all right with the old man if I say so. I been wantin' to have a talk with you, anyhow, ever since we pulled outa Frisco. You look a lot like a fella I used to see in Tientsin a coupla years ago. Do you want to come up? You get a swell view up there."

"A swell view of what?" Murray gravely wanted to know.

"Oh, a swell view of everything—ocean, sky, clouds, sea gulls, lifeboats, waves. You'd be s'prised. If you're interested in radio, I got a swell new layout—a quenched spark outfit. It sends a wicked distance. Come on up now, will you, before that gom they sent along with me comes up for his trick?"

"If there's one thing I'm particularly interested in," Murray asserted, rising, "it's a swell view."

"I'll bet the view from the top of the Himalayas is swell," Bub remarked as they started down the deck.

"It must be wonderful."

"And they say," went on the freckled wireless expert, "that the view of the Yangtze-kiang rapids at Ichang and up at Chung-King is somethin' grand."

"So I've heard," the tall young man agreed.

"I'd cert'n'y like to take that trip from Chung-King to India along the old merchants' trail on a camel," Bub remarked.

"It must be a wonderful trip," Mr. Murray murmured.

They rounded the after turn of the promenade deck and were presently at the foot of a narrow steel ladder which ran up to the boat deck. Alongside it, on the wall, was a sign in block letters, which brusquely said:

#### TO BOAT DECK

#### PASSENGERS POSITIVELY PROHIBITED

"Don't let that worry you," Bubbles said genially.

"I won't," the plumbing expert promised.

A lively breeze hummed in the funnel guys and stood the black smoke from the twin stacks northward in stiff banners. It was a delightful afternoon.

The Vandalia rose and fell languidly as she pushed her way through a purpling sea toward the Hawaiian Islands. A warm sun beat down and sparkled on wave crests, and the sky was blue and flawless.

"You can sit down there at my desk, Mr. Murray."

John Murray sat down at the glittering apparatus and briskly wrote his answer to the radiogram from his recent employers, thus:

PARAMOUNT PLUMBING PRODUCTS CORPORATION,  
New York City:

Kindly accept my resignation. Give Miss Sweeney my highest regards. JOHN MURRAY.

Miss Sweeney was—had been—his private secretary. She also had been of inestimable help to him, and he sorely regretted losing her.

Bub O'Day sat down in the chair he had vacated and threw in a switch which started a lively humming in the radio room. Presently his nimble, freckled fingers were dancing upon the rubber knob of the transmitting key. A minute or two later he removed the head phones from his ears and said:

"Let's sit outside. I'll figure the charges on that message later. Shall we sit down on this raft? You got a cigarette on you, Mr. Murray? I don't think we're apt to be butted in on up here."

"Let's trust not," Mr. Murray said graciously. He opened a curious looking cigarette case, and Bub, instead of taking a cigarette, took the case and looked at the back of it.

"Gee," he breathed, "this is Chinese

Damascene work, ain't it? They make these in southern China, don't they?"

"I don't know. A friend gave it to me."

"It's a funny thing," Bub said, "how much you look like that fella I used to see around Tientsin and Peking. He was just about your size—only he wore a mustache, with spikes on the ends of it. I'm not keepin' you from anythin', am I, Mr. Murray?"

"Nope. Tell me about this friend of yours."

"Well, he wasn't exactly a friend of mine. I mean, I never met him, but I used to see him around a lot. He got himself into a peck of trouble. He was a newspaper man, and he wrote a book. It was called 'Incorruptible China.'"

"You must mean Jordan Ames Holburn," the author of "Practical Plumbing" suggested.

"That's the guy!" Bub exclaimed. "Holburn. He stirred up a terrible row all over China with that book."

"I understand he is on board this ship," Murray remarked.

"You don't tell me!" Bub murmured.

"At least, there's a rumor going around to that effect."

"That's funny, Mr. Murray. His name isn't on the passenger list. I just looked."

"Perhaps he's traveling incognito."

"That may be it. I should think he would be traveling incognito," O'Day declared vehemently. "The closer he gets to China, the less his life is worth."

"As bad as that?" Murray inquired.

"That guy is one dangerous *hombre*," replied Bub. "Did you know he started a revolution in China?"

"You mean his book did?"

"No, I mean he did, personally. His book started so much trouble in Peking that they tried to kill him. That was the last time I saw him. It was after supper out in front of the Grand Hotel. He was just gettin' into a ricksha when a Chino slipped up behind him with a knife in his hand. I saw him and yelled."

"You did?"

"Yep. Mr. Holburn turned around just in time, and you never in your life saw anythin' snappier than the way he grabbed the knife out of that Chino's hand. He got him by the wrist and gave it a jujutsu twist, or somethin'. The Chino let out a yell and the knife came down clatterin' on the sidewalk."

"Well! Well!"

"Yep. It happened so quick I didn't know what was goin' on until it was all over. There was the Chino slinkin' away, moanin', with a broken wrist, and Mr. Holburn jumped into his ricksha and was dustin' off his hands. I got the knife."

"You have?"

"Yep. There was some blood on it. I think it got Mr. Holburn in the arm. Do you wanna see that knife, Mr. Murray?"

"I certainly do," the young man cried.

Bub removed it from his pocket. It was a handsome white steel blade, with a handle of green river jade, beautifully carved in the shape of a serpent's head. Mr. Murray examined the knife, turning it over and over in his hand.

"It's a mighty interesting curio," he commented. "What happened next?"

"Mr. Holburn faded. I mean, he got out of Peking, because he figured Peking was gettin' too warm for him, I guess. Gee, but he was one brave guy! No, I ain't kiddin', Mr. Murray. All my life I wanted to be the kind of guy Jordan Ames Holburn is."

"A case of hero worship, eh?"

"You said it, Mr. Murray. I'd like to tie up with him and go to Africa or anywhere where excitement was poppin'. Wherever he goes, trouble always happens. That's the kind of a guy I'm for. Well, that Chino's job didn't work as they wanted it to, but it told Mr. Holburn that it was time for him to fade. What they wanted him to do was to get out of China by the nearest treaty port."

"They did?"

"Yep. But catch him beatin' it out of the country that way! He goes down to Chung-King and he joins up with a tea caravan, bein' received like a ruby-button mandarin all along the way. Every time he comes near a walled city they lower the drawbridge for him and give him the key to the city on a silver platter. You heard that story, Mr. Murray?"

"Not in such detail. Go on, by all means."

"Well, it seems that Mr. Holburn was hipped on the idea of kickin' out the republic and makin' China a monarchy again. He was sold on the idea of havin' a dictator for China, and he preached that idea all along the way. Every town he hit he untied his bundle of fireworks, and before he got out of China by way of the

merchants' pass, all southern China was stewin' and boilin' away."

"Just another Chinese revolution," Murray said disparagingly.

"Just another Chinese revolution, my eye!" snorted the freckled radio genius. "He got all those southern mandarins lined up. They knew he was on the level and shootin' square and riskin' his dog-goned neck handin' out that kind of propaganda. His scheme fell through, all right, but believe me, the guy was game. And every one of those mandarins is back of this to a man."

"So?"

"Yep. That guy interested me, Mr. Murray. If I had his nerve I wouldn't be poundin' brass on this old hooker to-day. I'd be in the heart of China, raisin' particular hell. We put into Hongkong every three months, and I always take a run up to Canton. I know enough Cantonese—that's south Chinese—to get by, and I hang around the fantan joints a lot. That's where you pick up the dirt—just like the old-fashioned corner saloon."

"Queer idea!"

"Yep. Well, one night I was in Hong Gow Ching's dump and I scraped up an acquaintance with a Chino who'd been one of Mr. Holburn's rifle boys on that trip from Chung-King to India, and to hear him rave you'd 'a' thought Jordan Ames Holburn was old man Buddha himself; no kiddin'. He must have gone along behind Holburn, kissin' every spot on the road where Holburn put down his foot. I picked up a lot of stuff about Holburn from that Chino, and if it's true, as they're sayin', that he's on board this ship right now, it will be a grand day for me."

"How can you make sure?" the plumbing authority asked.

"That's what's botherin' me right now. If I walked right up to him and asked him, he would certainly deny it, wouldn't he?"

"I presume he would—unless he knew just what your game was."

"I'd like to tie up with that guy and see some fun," was Bub's reply to that. "Excitement and me are bosom friends, and how I do crave action! I don't know where to start lookin'. His name ain't on the passenger list. I looked."

"Have you gone to the captain or the purser?"

"No, sir; I don't want to start anythin'. If he's on this ship, and don't want any-

body to spot him, you can bet your sweet life I'm not goin' to go around spillin' beans."

"But if he is such a trouble maker, don't you honestly think you ought to report what you know to the captain?"

"The trouble is, Mr. Murray, I don't know it; I only suspect it."

John Murray looked at him curiously. "If you're so anxious to make a secret of his presence, how does it happen you've taken me into it? I might spill the beans myself, mightn't I? If I were anxious to start a hubbub, couldn't I go straight to the captain and tell him what you've just told me?"

Bubbles grinned impishly. "But you ain't goin' to, Mr. Murray. Why did I pick you out? Because you look like a game guy who likes excitement yourself."

"You never were more mistaken in your life," Murray announced. "There isn't an atom of adventure in me. I'm a solid, substantial business man. My business is publicity. I write stuff to sell plumbing."

"I know it. I read your book. It was hot stuff. You know, Mr. Murray, I started out tellin' you that there was a kind of a resemblance between you and this Holburn. It goes deeper than the skin, too. I read your book, and I read Holburn's book. What I don't know about literature would fill the entire Pacific Ocean, but it was a funny thing how those two books resembled each other, no kiddin'. One of them got you all boiled up over China, and the other one got you into a drippin' perspiration over plumbin'."

"Are you trying to intimate—" Murray began.

"Listen," Bub interrupted him. "I was tellin' you a minute ago about that rifle boy of Holburn's I had such a heart to heart talk with in Canton. Well, he was carryin' around a souvenir with him, and while it didn't mean anythin' to him, and just as much to me at the time, I filed it away in what I call my mind, for further reference."

"What was the souvenir?"

"It was a plain envelope, Mr. Murray, that Holburn had tossed away, and this rifle boy had picked up and carried right next to his yellow heart. Well, two years went their weary way, as they say in the movies, and Holburn passed entirely out of existence, as far as anybody knew, but



I still remembered the name that was on that envelope. The name on that envelope was John Murray!"

"Hell!" Mr. Murray remarked.

"Now wait a minute!" O'Day exclaimed, laughing a little. "Don't sock me yet, Mr. Holburn-Murray! I figured out all this inside my own dome, and I didn't have to go to anybody for help. What's more, I haven't spilled a single bean, and I don't aim to. Here's a radio for you. Or am I wrong?"

And, removing from his pocket the radiogram addressed to Jordan Ames Holburn, he handed it to the astonished Mr. Murray.

John Murray reached out to take the envelope. Then drew his hand back. Bub O'Day grinned.

"This is a mighty important message, Mr. Murray," he said, "and if I were you I'd stop kiddin' and see what it says. Then maybe we can put our heads together and decide on what to do next!"

Much of the color had deserted Murray's face. With a gesture that was almost one of surrender, he took the envelope from the wireless man's hand and opened it. Then, having perused it, he crumpled the sheet of paper into a small ball and tossed it over the side. He looked frowningly at Bub O'Day.

"Just what is your game?" he asked. "You know the ticklish position I am in. No matter why I'm going to China, my position is just as ticklish. There are only four men in the world, including yourself, who know that I am Jordan Ames Holburn. Now, what's your game? What do you want to keep your mouth shut?"

"A chance for a little excitement when we hit China," was O'Day's prompt answer. "I can lick any man my weight with bare fists in a rough and tumble, and I'm a pretty fair shot with an automatic. I know a little Chinese, and I know Shanghai and Peking the way you do. All I want, Mr. Murray, is to be let in on the fun. Are you startin' a real revolution this time—or what?"

"No," John Murray replied emphatically. "I'll let you in on any excitement, but, just between the two of us, I don't believe there'll be any. The fact of the matter is, I don't want any excitement. I've had enough to last me if I live to be as old as Methuselah. I'm fed up with excitement."

"You're not kiddin'?"

"No. Two years ago, when I came back from China, I swore I'd never let myself be mixed up in Chinese politics or any other kind of politics again. I started out when I was your age looking for adventure and romance and all that sort of thing, and I got a liberal dose of it. And two years ago I was through. I wanted to settle down—and I did. I took up the kind of work that has always interested me—publicity. I thought my past would die a natural death, and that I could lead the quiet, orderly kind of life I want to lead."

"And your past wouldn't stay in its grave?" Bub suggested. "And you're goin' back to China to give it a decent burial?"

John Murray nodded with a tired smile.

"Now you know everything, Bub. Is my secret in safe hands?"

"The answer is no and yes, Mr. Murray," the freckled imp replied. "No, I don't know everythin'; and yes, your secret is in safe hands. What I want to know is, who is the guy in Suite A?"

Murray looked mystified.

"I haven't the slightest idea," he declared.

"Ain't you and him, whoever he is, workin' together?"

"You ought to know by this time, Bub, that I am a lone wolf."

"Yeah? Well, sometimes even lone wolves get lonesome. So you ain't tellin' me what you're goin' to China for?"

"I am not. I've promised you, in return for keeping my secret, to let you in on whatever excitement happens to turn up. I'll take you along as my bodyguard, if you like."

"May I pack a gun?"

"Certainly! It will be necessary for you to pack one."

"Well, that's fine," Bub asserted happily. "But I crave to know just what our job is."

"I can't tell you that."

"Maybe I'll find out!"

"If you can, Bub, you're good."

"Well, I'm good. Now, we've got to decide what to do about this telegram from the State Department, Mr. Murray. How come they know you're on this old hooker?"

"How do they find out all sorts of bothersome things?" Mr. Murray said irritably. "The same way you do. They find let-



ters. They draw conclusions. The man I've been working for—the plumbing king of America, so to speak—knows my secret, too. But he's one of the best friends I have. We're closer than brothers—"

"How come he gives you the gate like he just did?" Bub interrupted.

"Because I couldn't explain to him my real reason for going to China, as well as I know him, and he no doubt believes I have given in to wanderlust again. I left New York in a hurry—had to—and wrote him from San Francisco."

Bub nodded thoughtfully.

"You don't suppose he tipped off the State Department?"

"Positively not. If he had tipped them off, this radiogram would have come addressed to Murray and not Holburn."

"As I see it," said Bub, "Jordan Ames Holburn is not aboard this ship, and all I can do is to send a service message to the San Fran' station, sayin' so. They will in turn notify the State Department that no such bird has taken passage on the Vandalia—and the State Department can suck its thumb and think up a way of annoyin' somebody else."

"You'll do that?" Murray asked crisply.

"Consider it done!" the operator replied. "I'll get this message off to San Fran', and then I'm gonna get out my old forty-five gun and polish it till it shines. Before you go, Mr. Murray, there's one thing I'd like to do that I've been wantin' to do for many's the year."

"Name it," Murray said, smiling, "and maybe you can have it."

"Shake my mitt," Bub explained. "All I have against you is that you like American plumbin' better than Chinese plunder!"

## V

JOHN MURRAY was much shocked by the discovery that the red-haired, bubble-blowing wireless operator had made. Two years previously he had been requested in no uncertain terms to stay out of China. That statement had been upholstered with the hint that if he attempted to return, certain influential circles in Peking would see to it that he did not escape as neatly as the last time.

His safety, his very life, now depended upon his entrance into China remaining unknown. He wondered how far he could trust that youngster in the radio room.

Might not Bub O'Day even now be broadcasting most dangerous information? Would it not be the better part of valor to leave the ship at Honolulu and later take such consequences as might befall?

John Murray was not going to China because he wished to; he was going because his journey was compulsory. He didn't want to dabble in Chinese politics any more. Let the Chinese work out the problem of China for themselves.

He was through tilting at windmills. Rather, he would be through, after just one more tilt. Then, thank God, his past would be forever behind him, and he could contemplate the future with enthusiasm.

He had told Bub O'Day nothing but the truth when he had said that he had sickened of adventuring; that his real career lay in constructive work along the lines in which he was greatly interested.

He wanted to settle down. He wanted to enjoy life as normal men enjoyed it.

He wanted to drive his own car, to play golf; he wanted a house of his own, and he wanted a wife, and he wanted children. What he wanted was, in short, eminently respectable respectability.

Life had been very sweet those two years while he had been the publicity director of the Paramount Plumbing Products Corporation. He had got a real kick out of that.

Sally Banning, athirst for romance and adventure, might sneer at him and call him a plumber, but you had to admit that it was something of an achievement to put over a book on a dull subject like bathrooms and have people buy it as eagerly as if it were one of the latest literary appeals to the world's mating restlessness.

He liked Miss Banning. In fact, he liked her much too much.

And he liked her father. What was more, he wanted Mr. Banning to like him, because he saw in the railroad potentate a large, legitimate opportunity to advance himself.

The railroad president was already hinting at the need of a good publicity director to put before the public the virtues of the Southern and Pacific Central. Mr. Banning was impressed by John Murray's level-headedness, and it behooved John Murray to watch his step.

If he could execute his delicate mission in China and get it behind him without being shot, stabbed, or detected, he would

cultivate Mr. Banning seriously. In that case the future was glittering and beautiful indeed.

But more than anything else he wanted the good opinion of Sally Banning. He really wished for something much more important than her good opinion, but he wasn't ready to admit it even to himself just yet.

He was, however, seriously looking about for the girl who would some day become Mrs. John Murray, and when he was sure he had met that girl, he wanted to win her solely on the grounds of his present and not his past performance. If Sally Banning was the girl, he wanted her to fall in love with John Murray, the respectable expert on publicity, and not with Jordan Ames Holburn, the notorious adventurer.

He knew enough about women to realize that the reputation of a Holburn would appeal to any imaginative girl much more than the reputation of a Murray, but he didn't know enough about women to realize that the two reputations might be nicely combined.

With hands in coat pockets, John Murray sauntered along the promenade deck until he reached the forward end. Here he paused and lighted a cigarette.

Negligently he leaned against the wall beside one of the latticed but opened windows of Suite A. He looked dreamily out over the sunlit sea and whistled softly to himself.

A whisper presently reached him.

"I saw you talking with some one this morning," the whisperer said.

John Murray stopped whistling, looked thoughtfully at the ash of his cigarette, and glanced casually down the deck.

"Yes, your highness," he replied in a low voice.

"Who is he?" the one inside the window demanded.

"He is Colton A. Banning, president of the Southern and Pacific Central Railroad."

"You must be careful."

"Yes, your highness. But he is quite safe. A tourist."

"I trust no one."

"Nor do I, your highness."

"It was distinctly understood," the invisible man pointed out, "that we were to have contact with no one during the entire trip."

"It was impossible, your highness," Murray explained, "to carry out that plan. My aloofness created talk. If I had shut myself up in my cabin as you have done, it would have created more talk. There are a dozen rumors current at this moment as to your own identity. They are saying, your highness, that you are Jordan Ames Holburn."

"By Buddha, no!" gasped the voice behind the lattice.

"But yes, your highness. And there has been an even more distressing development. The wireless operator has just informed me that he recognizes me. He saw me in Peking and Tientsin. He compelled me to admit who I am."

"That was folly!"

"It was inescapable, your highness," John Murray declared wearily. "But he is trustworthy."

"I could have Fong slip up there—" began the man at the window.

"By no means, your highness," Murray hurriedly interposed. "I can handle him easily. He may, I believe, be useful. Are you quite comfortable, your highness?"

"It is most monotonous," was the reply, "sitting in here all day, not being able even to peep out. Who is the girl who comes to this window and tries to look in? She is slender, and has most beautiful feet. I cannot see her face."

"It must be Mr. Banning's daughter."

"Would it perhaps be wise to use a knife—" the whispering voice began.

"By no means, your highness!" the young adventurer exclaimed. "She is simply a curious girl—quite harmless."

"Is she—lovely?"

"Very," John Murray replied, after a moment's hesitation.

"I should like to see her face," was the sighing rejoinder. "It is long since I have looked upon the face of a beautiful woman."

An expression of anxiety flitted across the young, stern, handsome face.

"You must be patient, your highness. If our plans go through, you can look upon the faces of the most beautiful women on earth."

"And hold them in my arms?"

"Yes, your highness—if you wish. Did Fong deliver my message to you that the thousand dollars you gave me for the captain, the purser, and the steward had been gratefully received?"

"Yes, Mr. Murray, but I have been worried. Are you sure they will not talk?"

"I am quite sure, your highness. So far none of them has attempted to communicate with any one by radio, or the operator would have told me."

"That is well. We reach Honolulu tomorrow. Report to me again immediately after we have left there."

"Very well, your highness. That is all now. Some one is coming."

The some one was Sally Banning. She came tripping up the deck, her brightly clad legs appearing fairly to twinkle. She wore a bright blue sports dress and she was hatless.

Her curly brown hair stood about her head in a gay little shock. She was smiling, and her eyes seemed to dance. There was a dimple in her left cheek when she smiled.

John Murray's heart began to thump heavily. She had, he thought, the most beautiful neck he had ever seen.

It occurred to him that it would be very nice to take Sally on his knee in front of a fireplace in which logs were burning, and to have her rumple his hair with her fingers, to take him by the ears and kiss him—frequently.

His reaction to Sally, he knew, was totally absurd. He couldn't be in love with the girl because he hardly knew her, and sensible men did not fall in love with young women they hardly knew.

Furthermore, it was ridiculous to entertain such thoughts in connection with Miss Banning, because, in the first place, she was rich and he was poor, and in the second place, he did not dare entertain thoughts of girls until his trip was over.

Besides, she wasn't the kind of girl he approved of, anyhow. She was far too beautiful to be sensible. And she was far too romantic. All she wanted in life was thrills, and he was positively not in the business of supplying thrills to any woman.

He would dismiss her, he decided, as she came brightly up the deck toward him, simply as the charming acquaintance of one of many sea voyages. Why not play with her? Why not enjoy her gay companionship until the *Vandalia* reached Shanghai? After all, some one would probably stick a knife into him before he had been in Shanghai many hours.

"Well," said Sally as she came up, "I see you're trespassing on my private stamp-

ing grounds. I've been trying all day to peek into that room, but the excitement is over, Mr. Murray. The rumor has burst. Jordan Ames Holburn is not on board, after all. I've just finished a very thorough investigation, and the steward tells me that the occupant of Suite A is an old Chinese merchant from San Francisco's Chinatown who is on his way back to the land of his fathers to die. So that's that. Do you feel like taking a swim? They've just finished rigging up a swimming tank on the after deck, and the steward tells me he has scads of swimming suits. Shall we?"

"I think the idea is very sound," John Murray replied gravely.

She linked her arm through his, and they started down the deck toward the steward's office.

"I want to know," Sally said, "why you studiously ignored everybody on this ship. If it hadn't been for my father crashing the gate, would you have aloofed it all the way to Shanghai?"

"I have a very reticent nature," he explained.

She laughed.

"You certainly weren't very reticent when you saw me several evenings hand running in the St. Francis dining room. Never in my life have I been stared at so! What worries me is, why have you treated me like dirt since we came aboard?"

"I only wanted to let the other fellows on the ship see a little something of you before I cut in and kept you exclusively to myself," the young man answered.

"I have always maintained," was Sally's pert rejoinder, "that no sea trip is complete without at least one love affair. It whiles away the time so. I just love to have some handsome devil like you fluttering around me. By the way, you don't mind if I call you John, do you, Mr. Murray?"

"Not if you don't object to my calling you Sally, Miss Banning."

"Stranger strangers than you have called me worse things than that, John. But I want to give you a solemn word of warning. My esteemed father has already intimated that he heartily approves of you. He thinks you are a nice, steady, sane, sensible, solid, respectable young man."

"He is right," John declared.

"Do you mean to tell me," she wailed, "that there isn't a spark of romance in you?"

"Not a spark, Sally."

"Or adventure?"

Murray shook his handsome head.

"Don't you long for romance and adventure?" she demanded anxiously.

He shook his head more emphatically this time.

"I am a very steady, sane, sensible, solid, respectable young man, just as your father said."

"How old are you?" Sally asked.

"Thirty-one," he replied.

"And you mean to tell me, John, that in all those years you have not once given in to the call of adventure?"

"Well," John answered thoughtfully, "I draw to an inside flush at poker once in awhile. That isn't adventure, of course; it's plain dare-deviltry."

"It's smug respectability," Sally contradicted him. "I think you're spoofing me, John. No one with your looks can convince me that you haven't led a wild, roaming life some time or another. Where did that little scar on your forehead come from?"

"I banged my head on a door one night."

"H-m!" she remarked. "That sounds fishy to me. I wish you wouldn't spoof me, because I hate spoofing when I'm serious, and gosh, but I'm serious now! A man with eyes like yours not romantic! What are you really interested in?"

"You," he replied.

"That's nice. And next to me?"

"Plumbing."

She looked at him with dismay. "Good Lord! And you've been that way all your life?"

"Every man," John said pontifically, "starts out in life to be a race horse, and ends up by doing heavy trucking. I've been a truck horse all my life, that's the only difference."

"And I suppose your ambition is to do heavier and heavier trucking?"

"My ambition," he asserted, "now that we've touched on it, is to have a house of my own—"

"I know!" she cried. "A wife and kid-dies! And you'll call her the little woman at first, but after awhile you'll call her ma, and pretty soon you'll be referring to her as your old lady."

"Exactly," John admitted.

"You're absolutely hopeless," Sally groaned. "Well, I'll tell you what my am-

bition is. I want to lead a romantic, exciting life. I want to go places where white women have never gone before—like Tibet and Timbaktu. I want a man who will thrill me with his deeds of daring.

"Listen!" she went on with glistening eyes. "Supposing I were to get into some dangerous predicament in Shanghai. What would you do?"

"Why, that's easy. I'd call a policeman."

"Lordy!" Sally groaned. "I believe you're telling the truth! I don't believe there's a spark of romance or adventure in your make-up. I honestly believe that if you and I were taking a walk in the woods, and we came to a shallow stream, you wouldn't pick me up in your great, brawny arms and carry me across, the way heroes always do, but would make me take off my shoes and stockings and walk over."

"You can read me like a book," John agreed.

"A book on plumbing," Sally suggested.

"Yes."

"I might as well tell you frankly, before we go any farther with our romance," she declared, "that I am not interested in books on plumbing, or in publicity of any kind. It all leaves me cold. You will have to rise higher if you're going to travel very far with me."

"I am going to try my darnedest," he announced, "to sell you what I think is the only worth while commodity in this life—*reality*."

"And I," Sally said stoutly, "am going to try my darnedest to sell you what I think is the only worth while commodity in this life—*romance*!"

They had reached the steward's office. He found them each a bathing suit, and they parted, agreeing to meet on the after deck above the canvas swimming tank when they had changed.

John Murray went to his stateroom with feelings of elation. It wasn't, thank God, going to be a love affair, after all. They were simply going to be the best of friends. They would swim and play and dance and talk together, and in Shanghai they would say good-by. It was so simple; so easy!

Twenty minutes later he had seen Sally Banning in a black bathing suit that fitted her as if it had been painted on with a brush—by a painter who didn't have any too much paint! He tried not to look at her. He always felt a little self-conscious



in a bathing suit, anyhow, but he had to look at her because she commanded him so to do.

"Look at me!" she exclaimed. "Do you think I will be arrested?"

"Why," he replied, "I don't see anything that any one could possibly criticize."

Never had he made a more truthful statement. If Sally in smart sport clothes had been bewitching, Sally in a one-piece black bathing suit was a real menace to the public's poise.

He had not realized how round, how slim, how perfect were her arms and legs. Reason again began to totter on its throne, and to himself John Murray confided:

"How in Sam Hill can I swim and dance and play with her and keep my head? It can't be done, but it has got to be done. I'm a poor man, out of a job, and she is the daughter of a multimillionaire. I am going to China on a job so dangerous that it may cost me my life. I can't play around with this kid. Somebody's going to be hurt, and I don't want it to be me—and it mustn't be her. I'd cut off my finger rather than hurt Sally!"

And Sally was meanwhile making mental remarks of a not dissimilar nature. Any man is at his worst or best in a swimming suit; there is no halfway. He cannot be inconspicuous. He must either strike joy into the feminine heart, or he must leave it absolutely cold.

And John Murray in a bathing suit was far more attractive than John Murray in the well-tailored tweeds he wore on deck. He had broad, splendidly developed shoulders, fine muscular arms, a slender waist, and handsome, long, hairy legs. He was really a delight to the eye. There wasn't an ounce of excess weight on him anywhere. So, to herself, Sally confided:

"Darling, you've got to watch your step. This man doesn't know how appealing he is, and you must be on your guard every moment or, first thing you know, you will be throwing your foolish arms around his neck and letting him slide significant jewelry upon an important left finger. I don't want to fall for any man yet awhile, because freedom is too sweet, and I don't want to fall, ever, for a man who hasn't a spark of romance or adventure in him. How dull life would be sitting across the breakfast table from a plumbing expert! Oh, why in the name of the good, the true, and the beautiful, isn't

he interested in something interesting? Then I wouldn't care what happened. I'd just drift and let nature take her well-known course."

But you would never have dreamed that such monologues were taking place in the mind of Sally or of John. All that actually passed between them was a gay smile and a mutually approving glance, whereupon Sally said:

"Let's see you dive, John."

The large canvas tank was slopping over with sea water. It was perhaps five feet deep. A makeshift springboard jutted out over it from the end of the deck, and Murray walked out to the end of this, looked back at Sally with a quick grin, and dived.

It was a jackknife—a smooth, graceful one, and he entered the water with hardly a splash. He came up, flinging the hair out of his eyes with a shake of the head, and saw Sally above him, her perfect white legs gleaming like ivory in the warm sunlight.

She elected to do a swan, and, considering the space restrictions, it was a lovely dive. She came up beside him, her green rubber cap shining, and they congratulated each other.

"When I know you better," Sally said, "I'll teach you how to kiss under water."

That gave John Murray quite a jolt. He had already formed the fatuous conclusion that this girl had been kissed by very few men, if any! This, to be sure, was as he wished it to be.

"Who taught you?" he wanted to know.

"A merman," she replied. "Off the coast of Sicily, in the Mediterranean, I went in swimming from a ship, and a merman came up and kissed me under water."

"I'd like to take a lesson now," John declared.

"There are too many people looking," Sally objected.

And this was true. She and John were the first passengers to take advantage of the swimming tank, and the rails above them were lined with people.

Some one laughed and threw down a small silver coin. It spun over and over and settled in the bottom of the tank.

Both swimmers dived for it. John went straight down, and as he reached for the glittering disk, a rounded arm went around his neck and his face was pressed tightly to Sally's breast. He struggled, freed himself, and came lazily to the surface.



She arose beside him with the dime between her teeth, but John wasn't smiling. That underwater embrace, combative and extremely wet as it had been, had done the thing he had not wished to be done. He wanted a great many more of the same—without the restricting presence of five feet of water!

Other passengers presently joined them in the tank, and then Sally and John went to their staterooms. He, on his part, tried to do some cool detached thinking as he dressed. There were a lot of things he mustn't forget.

He mustn't forget that she was, after all, only a pretty girl, and that the world was crawling with pretty girls. And he mustn't forget how she detested the realism he stoutly stood for.

He mustn't forget that she was an extremely rich young lady, and that he was an extremely poor young man, and out of a job; nor must he forget that, most important of all, he was going to China on a ticklish mission. And all the time he reasoned with himself, Sally in retrospect kept slipping in prankishly among his cold and solemn thoughts.

What a beautiful little figure she had! What heavenly eyes! What an adorable smile!

"If I don't watch my step," John said to himself, "I will be kissing that girl and making a lot of rash promises before another twenty-four hours have passed."

In her stateroom Sally was holding a like communion with her innermost self, thus:

"There is something about him. Dog-gone him, anyway! If I'm not careful he's going to ruin this trip for me! I positively am not going to fall for that man. I am going to omit all tricks. I am going to treat him politely and distantly and keep him in his place. How dreadful it would be to fall in love with a plumbing expert and have to listen the rest of my life to the intimate details of the habits and yearnings of lead pipes and brass valves and tappets or whatever they are! I guess I'd better not see any more of him to-day, darn his hide!"

Accordingly, each of them dressed as rapidly as bungling fingers would permit. He, having less to do, was on deck anxiously waiting for her to appear ten minutes before she arrived—and each of these minutes was an hour in length.

When she appeared, she came up to him breathlessly. They caught hold of each other's hands and drank deep of each other's eyes and—

"This simply won't do!" Sally frantically informed herself.

"For the love of Mike, go easy," John desperately warned himself.

One could hardly blame the poor devil for his desperation. The swim had brought a lovely rosy color to the girl's cheeks; her lips, without an atom of make-up, were brilliantly red, and her eyes were glowing like stars.

How long they clung to each other's hands and looked deep into each other's eyes it would be hard to say. They clung and gazed as if they had refound each other after being apart, lost, for days and days or weeks or months.

Sally's feet were the first to quit the clouds. She withdrew her hands firmly.

"We'll be in Honolulu to-morrow morning early," she said, as if she were making an announcement.

"Yes," he agreed blissfully, "before sunup."

"It would be fun to stay up all night and watch the sun come up," Sally said dreamily.

"Let's do it!" he suggested eagerly.

Sally pulled herself together. She appeared not to be charmed by the idea after all.

"I'd miss my beauty sleep," she demurred.

"As if you needed beauty sleep—you!" he cried. "Why! You're the most—you—I mean—"

Almost too late, John crawled into a neutral corner. No; it wouldn't be wise to stay up all night and watch the sun arise, with Sally.

He knew what these nights off Honolulu were like. They were mighty dangerous—warm, and velvety, and alluring.

"We can decide later," Sally said, as if she had taken no notice of his confusion. "Are you going to dance to-night?" she then asked very casually.

"Why—yes, I suppose so," he replied just as casually. "Are you?"

"Oh, I always do. I adore dancing. You probably don't. Dancing's romantic, isn't it?"

"Why, not at all," John replied, thankful for this safer footing. "I always looked upon dancing as very good exercise."

"Don't you get a kick out of dancing?"

"Why, no, not especially."

"You certainly are a cold proposition," Sally said. "You carry your realism into everything, don't you?"

He nodded.

"I suppose you carry realism into love, too," she suggested.

"How do I know?" he remarked. "I've never been in love."

"We have lots in common," Sally said. "Neither have I."

"I thought romantic people fell in love and out of it without an effort."

"This romantic person doesn't."

"But you have been in love," he persisted.

"No; I can't say that I ever have."

"Well, neither have I."

"Yes, John; you said that before. I heard you the first time. I'm so glad you're so hard-boiled. Otherwise we might fall in love with each other. But we aren't going to fall in love with each other, are we, John?"

"I should say not, Sally," he replied hoarsely. "Nothing is further from my thoughts."

"Or from mine," she declared promptly.

Mr. Banning appeared and took the distressing situation from their hands by intruding with the suggestion that Sally get herself ready for dinner.

"I'll see you on deck after dinner, John," she said.

"Right-o," he agreed, and the air was suddenly charged with high voltage electricity.

"I am glad," Mr. Banning remarked to his radiant but silent daughter as they started down the deck, "that you find that young man agreeable. I don't know when I've met a young fellow who impressed me so favorably. He's sane and level-headed. There isn't a streak of foolishness in his make-up. You really like him, do you, honey?"

"Why," Sally answered indifferently, "I guess he's all right."

## VI

JOHN MURRAY could see only the back of her head and shoulders at dinner, because of her position at the captain's table, and this fact distressed him exceedingly.

It would be very nice, he thought, to be able to look across the dining room and see Sally while he dined. She had a beau-

tiful head and a beautiful neck, and probably the most beautiful pair of shoulders with which a woman had ever been blessed since a far-seeing Creator had designed that section of woman's delightful anatomy.

But he wanted to see her eyes. It would have been very nice, looking across the dining room and seeing Sally's eyes.

But it could not have been telepathy, or this same thought in regard to his own eyes springing spontaneously into Sally's mind, which caused her to say, as she did presently:

"Dad, there seems to be a draft on my shoulders. Would you mind awfully changing places with me?"

Thus it occurred that Sally moved about and was presently, by chance, looking up and across the room to where the handsome, distinguished face of John Murray lifted above the others. Sally made a face at him, and John replied with a grimace.

Then Sally impulsively and playfully crossed her eyes, a trick which had taken her years to master, and the startled young man swallowed an entire oyster alive.

"Who are you flirting with?" Captain Ballister wanted to know.

Mr. Banning turned to look, and saw the blazing red face and the suffused eyes of John Murray across the room. He nodded, but the young man evidently did not see him.

"You're not flirting with Murray?" Sally's father exclaimed.

"Why not?" she demanded. "Isn't he perfectly respectable? Isn't he all right?"

"Is he?" Captain Ballister echoed in a low voice.

Sally looked at him swiftly, and promptly became sober.

"What do you know about him?" she queried.

"Well," the Vandalia's master parried, "what do you know about him?"

"Nothing," Sally replied, "except that he's in the plumbing and publicity line, and he wrote a book called 'Practical Plumbing,' and he's just as warming to a young girl's heart as a cake of ice in either hand. Now tell me what you know about him."

"I never saw him before this trip," the captain explained. "He isn't giving you a rush, is he?"

"I hope to tell you he isn't," was the girl's quick answer. "He was the aloofest thing in the world until dad positively took the bull by the horns this morning. The

young man has a nice, honest face, hasn't he?"

"He's a fine chap, and he's got a good level head," Mr. Banning said firmly, and that ended it, although the captain seemed to have left something unsaid.

John Murray meanwhile consumed his dinner, and from time to time glanced across at Sally Banning. His heart was singing, even if there was no cause for it. To be sure, it was a delight to look at Sally for any reason.

She and her father finished their dinner first, and he would have arisen at once and joined them if an elderly passenger, a Mr. Thorpe, had not slid into the empty chair across from Murray and begun to proclaim his admiration for "Practical Plumbing." He had a great many questions to ask regarding that celebrated volume, and by the time John had answered them and could tear himself away, the dance had begun on deck.

It was a delightful evening. The stars seemed to have come closer to the earth, and there was a liquid, alluring quality in their brilliance. A soft, fragrant breeze was blowing from off the land, and a glow on the horizon promised an early moon. Honolulu to-morrow!

Sally was being guided about the gently rising and falling deck by a stocky young man in officer's uniform. John did not see his face at the first glance, but identified him easily enough by his freckled red neck and his flaming red hair as that inquisitive, impertinent, impudent and worldly-wise wireless operator—the fourth man in the world who had succeeded in penetrating the identity of Jordan Ames Holburn, the other three being, in the order of their priority, the publisher of "Incorruptible China," the president of the Paramount Plumbing Products Corporation, and the suave, cultured, dangerous gentleman who occupied Suite A.

Murray walked beside the rail until he was within reaching distance of Bub O'Day, and tapped him heavily on the shoulder.

"May I cut in?" he wanted to know.

"Oh, you big bum!" the freckled radio genius groaned, and relinquished the radiant specimen of girlhood in his arms to John.

Sally Banning was presently making the discovery that John Murray might be an authority on plumbing and publicity, an

adept at water sports, and the owner of a figure that Adonis might have envied, but he was likewise a past master at dancing. He held her just as she liked to be held, neither too close nor too far away, and he danced with a freedom, a grace, a rhythm that she found divine.

She also liked his silence. To the excellent time of the little Filipino orchestra he piloted her here and there, and permitted her thoughts to wander unhampered where they would. She could not remember when she had danced with a better dancer.

"It's a shame," Sally said to herself, "that he seems to be able to do all the things well that I like a man to do well—in fact, better than any man I can easily recall—and is still so impossible. If he only weren't a prosaic, commonplace publicity man!"

To himself John Murray was confiding, as he went from the seventh to the eleventh heaven with her floating in his arms:

"It is certainly tough that things are as they are. What a little dream she is! And what a fool I am to be playing with fire! Never in the world could she see me for her dust, because I am a poor man, and jobless. Even if I were sure of getting out of China alive, she wouldn't be for me. Why did I ever have to see her? My luck is certainly getting tougher and tougher."

The two seemed to be floating upon a rainbow sea. Lightly, dexterously they wove in and out between couples, and spun this way and that. Paradise could hold no sweeter enchantment, they were sure.

Their Eden was presently entered by a serpent, a snake in human form, in the person of the lanky first officer. He slapped John Murray violently on the shoulder and said in honeyed tones:

"I beg pardon, but may I cut in?"

"Oh, you big bum!" John said, and relinquished his precious one.

He strolled to the side lines, where an old lady informed him that Miss Banning and he danced beautifully together. He thanked her, and looked for the girl he had lost. Presently her lovely face appeared, and she sent him a languishing look. Was it a distress signal, or wasn't it?

In case of doubt, play safe. Murray played safe by cutting in on the first officer. Once again he entered heaven, but this time he and Sally had progressed

gracefully hardly halfway up the deck when that grinning imp from the radio department cut in.

Bubbles was, in turn, cut in on by a slim young whelp in tweeds. And the bliss of this one was soon ended by Captain Ballister himself. The master of the *Vandalia* was a dancer of the old school.

He hopped and leaped, and refused to have his partner taken away from him. He frowned down fiercely on this modern practice of cutting in, and with Sally he danced until the bitter end, ignoring all interruptions.

"I thought I might dance with you this evening," John said, when he could reach the girl at the end of that number. "Your popularity is deserved, and all that, but you seem to be forgetting that we plighted our troth this afternoon."

"The only helpful hint I can give to the lovelorn," was her laughing reply, "is to sneak me out of this mob. Girls are scarce, and there are at least nine men who still crave the fun of walking on my toes. There is usually a sequestered nook in the bow of a large ship where one—or two—can watch the moon come up and the stars wheel in their courses. Or do you want to stay and fight it out?"

"Let's try the bow," John suggested.

They made their way across the little temporary bridge over the forward deck well, and in the darkness found the triangular space, farthest forward, made by the bows. Beneath them the water turned back in gleaming folds of phosphorescence.

The stars, with darkness about the two stargazers here, were like shining wet bulbs. A glow on the horizon brightened, and a large, red, egg-shaped moon squeezed itself out of the Pacific and made the evening a thing of absolute perfection. Its dull red glow was caught and faintly held by a headland which marked the southernmost extremity of Oahu.

The breeze was westerly, and rich and moist with the fragrance of tropical vegetation and flowers. The bow rose and fell lazily, gently, almost imperceptibly.

A delicate perfume was exuded by Sally's hair, and John bent closer and deeply inhaled it. The dim light of the stars and the rising moon made it possible for him to see her vaguely. She was gazing out voicelessly across the black water toward that spot of rosy mist which marked Oahu—their first landfall.

He had the sense of being all alone with her on some remote edge of the world; that they had been two, but now were blissfully one. Her shoulder pressed lightly against his upper arm, and he wondered what she was thinking about.

"There," Sally said in her joyous voice, as she flung out an arm suddenly and pointed with an indistinct white finger at the red moon, "is romance."

"All I can see," John retorted steadily, "is a plain, familiar old moon that ought to be full to-morrow or the night after."

"Don't you get a kick out of that moon?" she demanded.

"I can't say that it offends me," he answered. "I think it's a very handsome moon. I am getting a kick out of your getting a kick. I think it's wonderful to be able to feel that way about an ordinary moon."

"This," Sally said, "is really serious. I can plainly see that your education has been neglected. Lord, John, don't you feel a thrill at all this—the stars, the moon, the black sea, and Hawaii off there somewhere in the night? Aren't you impressed at all?"

"It's handsome," he admitted.

"But aren't you pulled by it? Doesn't it fill your mind with wild ideas? Doesn't it make you wonder and speculate and—and doesn't that tropical smell fill you with visions of jungles and strange peoples and—and a terrible, indescribable longing?"

"Not indescribable," John declared.

"Ah, you're weakening—"

"My God!" he exclaimed. "Do you think I can stand beside you here, so all alone, and not be filled with a terrible longing?"

"Oh, please—"

"I can't stop myself, Sally! It hit me when I first saw you in San Francisco, and I vowed and swore when I saw you on this ship that I wouldn't let things go any farther. You can't stop me now!"

"I'll go away!"

"You'll stay and listen." He seized her hand, to hold her if she attempted to make good her threat, but she didn't struggle. The hand he took was relaxed in his.

"You're going too fast," she murmured.

"The agreement is that we say so-long in Shanghai. Somebody's going to be hurt, John."

"Somebody is absolutely sunk already," he amended. "You can control this thing



if you're strong enough, but I'm not. I tell you, I am mad about you."

He stopped, to give her a chance to protest if she wished, but she only listened.

"God knows what I can give you, Sally, but—"

"It doesn't take you very long to get practical," the girl took him up. "What you want to give me is a nice comfortable home and the position of a highly respectable marriage. You want conventionality. You want a settled life. You want a home and a wife and children—all the trimmings."

"Well, why not?" he almost groaned, but she went on steadily:

"Lordy, I'm honest. A man can tell when a girl's a square shooter. You can tell that, can't you? You know I'm not evading any issues. Well, I'll tell you the truth, too. What you want isn't what I want. I've seen too many loves go on the rocks because two people thought a mutual passion would bridge just everything. It's the bunk, John. You know as well as I do how it works. I won't be nailed to a house for any man—not for awhile, at least. I want life. I want thrills, adventure, romance. And it's *all* I want. John, you haven't once lifted above the dead level of—of plumbing. Not even here with this and all."

Her sweeping gesture included the moon, the stars, the glow on Koko Head—the very universe.

"I'm not razzing you, John," Sally continued. "I know as much about facts as you do. I could faint in your arms this very minute, and it would be wonderful. But there are breakers ahead on this course. There is nothing to do but put the helm hard over and take the other tack."

"You can't get around the fact that I've fallen head over heels in love with you," John growled.

"I'm not trying to get around it, you sweet thing," she assured him. "Sum it all up for yourself. You disapprove of my line, and I simply detest yours. You're saying to yourself that you could clip my wings. Well, I don't want 'em clipped. I've never had a real adventure in my life, and I'm not going to think about settling down until I have."

"There's nothing in it," John announced bitterly.

"How do you know?" she retorted.

"You've never had an adventure. You admit it. You've been stolid and smug and respectable and strait-laced and conventional all your life. What do you know about adventure?"

"There's nothing in it," he repeated. "The greatest adventure is to live a normal, calm life with some one you love, and to get somewhere with the work you like. The trouble with you modern girls is that you find it out too late. The only thing you find when you go hunting adventure is trouble and restlessness. You burn yourself up."

"You speak as if you know what you're talking about," the girl chided, "but by your own admissions you don't know anything about it. I've had the other thing all my life, and I'm fed up. I'm going to keep looking for a real thrill till I find one."

"Give me just one kiss," John pleaded.

"No," Sally replied with determination. "You can hold my hand for a minute, if it will make you feel any better. It isn't much, but it's the best I can offer. My motto from now on is going to be safety first. You are a dangerous *hombre*, John."

She felt for his hand and snuggled hers into it. John gave it a quick pressure.

"Mad?" she asked presently.

"Not the least bit," he asserted. "What you've said is true, and I realize it perhaps even better than you do. We aren't meant for each other. It would be folly for us to be anything more than friends."

It was pretty hard for John Murray to say this, looking down into her upturned face. The starlight lent it a soft quality of enchantment. Her eyes, dim and dark, seemed somehow to be dreadfully sad.

"It's too bad," he added, "because we do click so well. It's hard finding anybody who talks your language."

"Yes," Sally agreed. "Do you suppose that's Honolulu over there?"

"No, that's a bay we're just opening up, and Diamond Head is the dark, shaggy mass to the westward. Honolulu is the next bay. The captain of a lady liner once mistook that bay for Honolulu harbor and piled up his ship. If you look sharp, up there to the north, you can see the beginning of the Pali. That's Kanaka for 'precipice,' and a great many brave warriors were tumbled over it to their death in a battle years ago."

"You've been here before!" Sally exclaimed.



"I lived here as a kid," he admitted.

"And do you mean to say that the South Sea and Japan and China—so near—didn't tug you?"

"Why should they?" John argued, although he might truthfully have said that he had yielded to that tug mighty early in life; had gone pearling and blackbirding in the southern seas, and had stowed away on a ship the first time when he was only fourteen.

It was a temptation to let Sally know these and other things. It would be so easy to win her that way. But he didn't want Sally on that basis. Once he had won her he would have to keep it up, and he didn't want to keep it up. All that foolishness was behind him.

He heard her sigh, and he was glad that he had sufficient strength of mind not to infold her in his arms.

"Let's go back," she said, "and let's not stay up for the sunrise."

The *Vandalia* was tied up alongside the pier in Honolulu when John Murray awoke, conscience clear, in the morning. Thank God, the whole thing was settled! Sally and he were going to be good friends and nothing more. They weren't meant for each other—and that was that.

It was a delightful golden tropical morning, fragrant with the scent of flowers and fresh from a rain that had fallen during the night. It was a perfect day, in short, for playing, and the *Vandalia* would not clear for Japan until dusk.

Sally met him after breakfast at the gangplank, and they slipped ashore alone, hired a touring car, and drove straight to Waikiki Beach. They swam in the surf and loafed on the sand until noon, lunched at the Moana, and in the afternoon visited the Pali and the Punch Bowl.

And not once during the day was a reference made to last night in the bow. Only twice did they trespass near danger. Once was when they were at the Pali, looking down from the dizzy heights of that famous precipice to the floor of jungle and sea—a sea which shaded from palest green inshore to the deepest purple far out.

Sally ventured nearer the edge than John thought was prudent. He pulled her back, and for a moment she lay breathlessly against his chest, looking up into his face with glowing eyes.

At that moment they were alone on the top of the world. No one was near but

their chauffeur, who dozed behind his wheel. Sally parted her lips, her head went back a little farther, and her eyes seemed to swim.

John could have kissed her then, but he didn't. He let her rest against him for a moment, then led her toward the car, and the danger was past. But he would remember that dreamy smile, that heavenly glance, for a long, long time.

There was another moment, a little later, when they were leaving the Punch Bowl. It was near the end of the day, and Sally was tired from sightseeing; besides, she had a sunburn from the swim and it made her sleepy.

When their car left the Punch Bowl she relaxed against John and looked up at his face for a long time. Then, with a little sigh, she snuggled her hand into his. Presently her head fell against his shoulder and she dozed.

John might readily have put his arm about her and snuggled her close to him, but he didn't. He was playing absolutely safe. He had his emotions exactly where he wanted them, and where they belonged, and he was going to keep them there.

Sally awoke as their car descended the long hill into the city. She sat up and removed her hand from his.

"It's been a lovely day," she said.

"Yes," he agreed.

The smokestacks of the *Vandalia* thrust themselves above the tangle of shipping in the harbor. Their day was over. John had survived the ordeal of a Sally alluring and seductive in a bathing suit, a Sally sparkling and provocative across from him at luncheon, and a Sally sweet and dreamy-eyed beside him on a long, enchanting motor ride. He had not, by word or gesture, intimated to her that he loved her, and that life without her was going to be an endless Sahara.

That day, in short, had established with firmness the fact that they would be nothing more to each other than friends.

## VII

AND the same experiment had left Sally Banning in a state of unhappy indecision. She was in no mood to be questioned when her father met her on the deck.

Had she had a pleasant day with John Murray? There was an anxious look in his eyes to accompany the question.

"We had a lovely time," she replied.

"You like him, don't you?"

"Very much."

"I think," Mr. Banning said, "that he is one of the finest chaps you have ever gone with. I mean, I like him so much better than these pip-squeaks who play around you at home. He's a real man."

"Yes," Sally agreed, and changed the subject by telling him of some of the sights she had seen.

She knew she was on the verge of weakening; ready to make the admission to herself that the dull respectability of life with John Murray was preferable to the most thrilling kind of life without him.

She admired his stubbornness, too. Most men placed in his position, and wanting her as badly as he had seemed to last night, would have made clowns of themselves trying to appear romantic. John Murray had remained himself. He hadn't shown off; he hadn't argued.

If he had argued or tried to sway her to his way of thinking, she could have dealt with him. His acceptance of her stand was what made her so unhappily undecided now. And she knew that he would not give in.

She didn't want to meet John's eyes this evening across the dining room, so she took her old seat. After dinner she danced with him and with others, but she retired early to her room.

She undressed and got into bed, but she could not sleep. Sunburn always stimulated her, and her nerves were fairly tingling now. She lay listening to the rumbling of the propellers.

She dozed, awoke sharply, and knew that sleep was not for her. It was after two o'clock. Sally decided that a walk might quiet her, so she dressed and went on deck.

The Vandalia was moving smoothly through a tranquil sea. There was hardly a ripple on the water.

The moon, now waning, sent a shaft of tremulous silver to the ship, and Sally, alone on the deserted deck, felt lonelier than she had ever felt before in her life. It was a night made for romance, and there was, it seemed, no romance.

She came to a decision as she stood looking up at the bright moon. She would wake up John Murray and tell him that she had thought things over, and that she loved him. But she would take one turn around the deck before she awoke him.

Sally had been standing at the rail about halfway aft on the port side. Now she started forward, but she did not complete her circuit of the deck.

In the darkness above the forward deck well she stopped with her hands resting lightly on the rail. The stars were so close that the forward mast seemed to scrape them. A warm, damp wind blew in her face.

Out there, beyond the horizon, was China. In it were queer, topsy-turvy cities—pagodas and temples—silks and spices and jades—and incense.

Incense! It seemed to Sally Banning, as the ship lurched to an unseen ground swell and the pressure of the head breeze was momentarily abated, that the air she was breathing was rich with incense. Sandalwood!

She turned away from the rail with slow realization, and saw, obscurely, a tall man standing in the doorway of Suite A. A queer golden glow filled the room behind him, and against this light he seemed like a silhouette cut from black paper.

Behind him, on the wall, was fastened a long portrait in vermilion and black of Kuan Ti, the Chinese god of war, and on either side of this were braziers from which spirals of pale blue smoke climbed into the air.

The tall man in the doorway was standing perfectly still, and she knew that his eyes were upon her, although his face was in total darkness. Now he shifted his position slightly, came forward a step, as if tentatively, and the rays of a deck lamp fell upon him.

He was Chinese—and old. His face was long and yellow and seamed, and he was clad in the garments of a mandarin of the highest order under the old régime—a ruby button mandarin.

He wore a tiny black skull cap, on the top of which a jewel twinkled, and his robes fell about him in richly embroidered folds. Metallic embroidery or gems sewn into the cloth held little rippling bars of light as waves will on a pond when the afternoon light is about gone.

To Sally his appearance was mystifying and thrilling. She had pictured a dying old Chinese. This man was not near death.

Wrinkled and gray he may have been, yet his bearing was erect. There was, she thought, a certain aspect of regality about him.

"Do not be alarmed," his voice, low and calm, came to her.

"I am not alarmed," Sally assured him.

The mysterious occupant of Suite A promptly moved toward her. He must have worn thick felt sandals, because his feet did not make a sound.

He was taller than John Murray, and probably in his youth had been broad. No doubt he was Mongolian.

Sally stifled a somewhat hysterical laugh. She seemed to be tingling all over.

Later she would assure herself that it was some instrument of fate that led her from her stateroom to this spot at two o'clock in the morning. Every nerve in her body now was on the alert, aquiver, and she was consumed with curiosity.

"They said you were sick," she remarked.

He looked down at her steadily.

"What else have they said?"

Sally tingled anew at that. He had, in so few words, confided to her that the rumors were false.

"That you are going back to China to die; that you're a merchant from Chinatown, in San Francisco—"

She checked herself as his smile spread.

"You are Miss Banning, are you not?"

"I am," Sally answered. "Why?"

"I only wanted to make sure. You are visiting China with your father, are you not?"

"Why—yes!" she gasped.

"I wonder," was his next amazing statement, "if you are as clever as you are beautiful!"

Sally looked at him with large, glowing eyes. The mystery was growing more and more exciting, and now she was beginning to sense intrigue.

"You are going to see China," he continued. "I mean, you are only going to see the surface of what you think seems to be China. It is a shame that one so beautiful and clever—" He stopped.

"I am going too far," he muttered then. "I have penned myself up in that room so long that I think aloud. Loneliness is not a good thing."

"But you can trust me," Sally pleaded. "Honestly, you can! I won't tell a soul."

"Ah, but I have already said too much."

"Oh, don't stop now! Why, you haven't said anything!"

"And you will repeat nothing that we say?"

"Nothing! Not a word! On my honor!" she panted.

"I was only thinking," he said reflectively, "what a beautiful and clever woman like you could do for China."

"You are going to start a revolution!" Sally gasped.

"Hush! We cannot tell who may be listening. Where is that young man with whom you have been seen so much?"

"You mean Mr. Murray?"

"Is that his name? The tall, handsome young man with the curly brown hair and blue eyes?"

"Yes, that's Mr. Murray. He's in bed, asleep, hours ago."

"It is not safe for us to be seen talking here," he whispered.

"Listen!" Sally said excitedly. "There is a perfectly wonderful place away up forward—in the bow. It's hidden from behind by all sorts of machinery. Let's go there! We can talk undisturbed."

The tall old Chinese examined her thoughtfully.

"Very well," he agreed. "If you will lead the way."

And with the crafty look of a conspirator, Sally gestured to him to follow her. She vanished promptly into the darkness of the deck well.

She crossed the little bridge from the deck below to the forepeak, and from time to time she paused, making sure that he was following. Her heart was hammering with excitement.

And presently they stood side by side in the bow.

"I'm dying to know," were Sally's first words, "who you are."

"My name is Ho Tung."

"I mean, who are you?"

"I cannot tell you that—yet. I must know you better, in fact, before I tell you anything more. I will tell you this, Miss Banning. I have been watching you, studying you day after day from that window. I have been at the point, several times, of calling out to you. And I am glad that I have at last met you. You are quite as charming, quite as clever as I hoped you would be."

Sally held her breath and waited. He flung out an arm dramatically toward the invisible horizon.

"Out there," he said in a voice that seemed to throb with adventure, "is China, a vast, rich, mysterious empire, all at odds.

China is, and has been for the better part of a century, divided against itself. What an opportunity for some modern Messiah to lead those teeming millions into some land of promise, where foes would become friends, where swords and rifles and machine guns would be thrown down and the tools of industry picked up again!"

"It would be wonderful!" Sally breathed. "And you," she added impulsively, "are the man who is planning to do just that, aren't you?"

"It is a dream," he answered, "that I hardly dare indulge in, even in the security of sleep, and yet I am taking this risk."

"You mean, talking about it to me? Oh, Mr. Ho Tung, I wish you wouldn't say such things! Honestly, you can trust me. If you only realized how much I long to help!"

"You—help?" he murmured. "But you are in love!"

Sally uttered a little indignant sound that resembled a snort.

"I, in love?" she said, and laughed. "With whom?"

"With this young Murray."

"That," she said, "is just too absurd, honestly, Mr. Ho Tung. If you only knew how I'd love to help! It would really be making history, wouldn't it?"

"It would, indeed," the tall Chinese admitted.

"But how can I be of help?"

"That," he replied, "I cannot tell you just now. A beautiful, clever woman is always useful. There is so much to do. Yet how could you help, Miss Banning? You are not free."

"On the contrary, I'm as free as a lark!"

"But your father—"

"I am free, white, and twenty-one," she interrupted him. "I am old enough to lead my own life. If you only knew, Mr. Ho Tung, how I long for adventure!"

In the light of the stars and the sailing moon he scrutinized her face. Sally's lovely countenance was earnest and full of resolve.

"It might mean danger," Ho Tung announced.

"Oh, I adore danger! I—I would give my life for China! Honestly, I would!"

"I was sure," he said gratefully, "that I had not made a mistake in confiding in you. It is time now, I think, that we part—until the next time. I want your solemn promise to repeat no word, make no refer-

ence to what has taken place between us to-night. My life, Miss Banning, is in your hands. More than that, the life of China is in your hands. If my enemies knew that I am aboard this ship—"

With a quick, sinister gesture he drew his left thumbnail across his Adam's apple.

"I promise to tell no one, Mr. Ho Tung!" Sally gasped.

"Then we will part—until to-morrow night," he said. "I will follow you back to the promenade deck at a safe distance. If you are seen by any one, cough twice. I will take that as a signal. *Ding how!*"

"What does that mean?" Sally tremulously demanded.

"It is Chinese for 'good luck.'"

"*Ding how*, Mr. Ho Tung!" Sally breathed.

And on tiptoes she left him. She proceeded casually aft, with eyes alert, ears attuned; but the coast was clear. Presently she had the satisfaction of seeing that Mr. Ho Tung was safe in Suite A, with the door closed.

She was so excited she hardly knew what she was doing or where she was going. She wanted to wake up John Murray and tell him that he was wrong; that excitement and adventure and exotic romance were hers at last. But she mustn't tell a soul!

She closed and locked the door of her stateroom and undressed with cold, fumbling fingers. All her life she had longed for this. Without warning, she had been plunged into the heart of an intrigue.

Some day—who knew?—she might be known as the Jeanne d'Arc of China—the beautiful, clever woman who had, Messiah-like, led those teeming millions into the promised land!

## VIII

THE nights that followed were thrilling ones for Sally Banning, and the days were ages long. In a twinkling, John Murray had lost his fascination for her, and oh, how glad she was that she had not obeyed that impulse to awaken him and accept him on his own terms!

What a narrow squeak that had been! If she had not decided to take that final turn about deck she might never have met Mr. Ho Tung; she would have drifted into a closer and closer intimacy with John Murray.

She could smile now at the narrowness of that squeak. She, who would undoubt-



edly play a leading rôle in making China into the brilliant empire it had once been, the wife of John Murray, plumbing authority, publicity expert! It was too hideous to think about.

She would become the mystery woman of Peking. Notables from all parts of the world would consult her. She would be a maker of history.

Sally's only difficulty was in keeping it a secret. She wanted to tell everybody. Temple bells tolled in her head, and the breath of her lungs was sandalwood incense.

Never had life been so interesting. Even the days, in time, became fairly tolerable. She could lie back in her steamer chair, dozing—making up a little of the sleep she was losing at her early morning conferences with Mr. Ho Tung—and look with contempt upon the stodgy, dull, everyday people about her.

They thought she was nothing but a pretty girl, the daughter of a very rich man, without a mind of her own! They treated her with the patronizing deference one accords a spoiled child.

If they only knew that they were acting in a condescending manner to a woman who would some day be referred to respectfully in histories!

"What in Sam Hill," her troubled father asked one day, "has got into you lately?"

"Why, dad," she murmured, looking at him with that mysterious new look that she had adopted, "I don't know what you're driving at."

"I'd like to know what's bitten you," Mr. Banning said, rather inelegantly.

"You act as if you've got something on your mind. You look the way you did that time you were planning to elope with that young saphead of a cowboy on my Arizona ranch, whatever his name was."

"Be yourself, darling; I'm planning no elopements."

"You might do worse than plan an elopement with young Murray," he came back at her grouchy. "He's without a question the finest chap who has ever paid any attention to you, and you treat him like the dirt under your feet. I think it's pretty rotten, the way you led him on and then dropped him like a hot potato."

"Daddy, honestly, I can't be annoyed by that man. I've grown to detest the very faucets on my bathtub."

"Has he ever talked plumbing to you?"

"Why, I can't say that he—"

"You bet he hasn't! And he's interesting and level-headed. I hope you haven't fallen for that little pip-squeak of a radio operator."

"Dad, don't be vulgar."

"Well, what's got into you lately, then?"

"I'm just thinking. Good night! Can't I think?"

"God only knows," her worried parent groaned.

Sally was grateful to John Murray for not annoying her in this manner. Since her coolness had developed, he had little by little fallen into the habit of staying away from her. He was just as pleasant as ever; he danced with her regularly in the evenings, but not by a sign did he intimate that there had ever been the glimmer of anything between them.

She knew that he was acting as any gentleman, under the circumstances, would, and she was really sorry for him. No doubt he was eating his heart out.

Well, some day she would drop him a line. She would tell him that she had more genuine affection for him than for any man she had ever known, but that duty had called her; a great responsibility had been given her, and she could not shirk, and she hoped that he would understand.

Her duty to China must come before personal considerations. She decided that she would write this sad little note on the Peking palace stationery.

And meanwhile, night after night, she was meeting the mysterious, fascinating Mr. Ho Tung in the bow of the ship. True, beyond the confidences he had given her on the night of their first meeting, he had added few details. He must be surer of her, he said, when she tried to pry more information out of him.

"You might let fall some word that would spoil my plans," he disappointingly said, and none of Sally's pleas or repeated assurances could shake him.

"You must give me some proof of your earnestness," he declared unexpectedly, on the night when the *Vandalia* sailed from Japan and entered the Yellow Sea.

"But what more proof do you need?" Sally wailed.

In the light of the stars he looked long into her face.

"When we reach Shanghai," he answered finally, "a small fast launch will slip up beside this ship as soon as darkness

has fallen. I am taking that launch to Nanking. It is in Nanking that my plans will crystallize."

"The revolution will start in Nanking?" Sally breathed.

"I did not say that, Miss Banning. In Nanking I will meet my aids, my colleagues, from all parts of China. Will you go with me to Nanking?"

"Yes!" Sally answered promptly, for she had been expecting something of this nature for days.

In the starlight he stared at her.

"Without question?"

"Without question!"

"But your father—your friends here on this ship—"

"I will leave a note for him, explaining that I met an old school friend, and that we have left for—for—"

"Peking," he suggested.

"I do know a girl in Peking," Sally informed him.

"That is excellent."

"Later, I will write him and tell him exactly what I have done, and that I trust he will forgive me, but that the good of China must come before everything else."

"I think that will be satisfactory," Mr. Ho Tung said. "We will reach Shanghai to-morrow night. You will have a small hand bag packed. In the confusion of docking, we will slip away to the river side of the steamer. If you do not see me, go aboard anyway. The name of the launch is the Luchow."

"I will be ready," Sally agreed breathlessly.

"You will not fail me?"

"Never!" she declared.

And the girl was, indeed, without qualms. She was entirely willing to burn her bridges behind her.

"I should advise," the Oriental mystery man went on, "that you likewise leave some sort of note for Mr. Murray, if that is the name of the young man with whom you were on such friendly terms."

"But I am no longer on those terms with him, Mr. Ho Tung."

"Nevertheless, it would be well to leave word for him. Simply say that you have decided suddenly to visit a friend in Peking. Then, when he and your father compare notes, they will not worry."

"You know best," Sally said, with the feeling that he had left a great deal of importance unuttered.

Mr. Ho Tung then began telling her fascinating stories of Chinese intrigue, as he did every night. He told her the inside stories of the Boxer Rebellion, of the Revolution of Nineteen Six. There was no fact of modern Chinese history not familiar to him, and he discussed these matters in a way that held Sally spellbound.

To her it was a new and wondrous side of life. And to-morrow she would be in China, and her part in one of these thrilling intrigues would begin. True, Mr. Ho Tung had not yet told her what part she would play, but she knew it would be an important one, because he never seemed to tire of telling her what a beautiful, clever woman she was.

And while Sally thrilled and glowed, the young man she had almost loved was suffering sensations of another kind entirely. John Murray had been at first relieved when Sally's attitude made it possible for him to withdraw gracefully from a difficult situation.

Yet, as the days went by, and her coldness and aloofness increased, he began to find it difficult to feel so relieved. It hurt him to realize that Sally could have dropped him so suddenly, in view of the golden moments they had shared.

He was going to China reluctantly, anyhow, and it made him hate his errand more than ever to realize that it was responsible for his inability to pursue Sally with the zest with which he whole-heartedly wished to do so.

And now that Shanghai was near, his older worries returned. As far as he knew, no one was cognizant of his imminent arrival at this forbidden land but Bub O'Day—and was Bub to be trusted?

If word leaked out that Jordan Ames Holburn was on this ship, returning to the land that had been forbidden to him two years ago, the life of John Murray would be held exceedingly cheap. He had been shot at on previous occasions, and he had never learned to like the sound of bullets passing close to his head.

He would leave the Vandalia immediately upon her arrival in Shanghai and catch the night express for Nanking—unless he walked into a death trap when he stepped ashore. It was this possibility of frustration, an ambush, at the very pier where the ship moored, that worried John. It made it difficult for him to sleep.

On the night when the Vandalia slipped

into the Yellow Sea, he abandoned his bed entirely. He must, he realized, gather himself together. It irked him a little to admit that adventure no longer appealed to him; that he was no longer interested in adventuresome undertakings; that his whole purpose lay along lines that Sally Banning called stodgy and conventional and dull.

Well, adventure would be forever behind him once he left Nanking. His spirit would be freed; he could return to America and the work he loved. Old China would be forever in the past.

But he must steel himself for the ordeal of the next few days. And, as he could not sleep, he decided to go on deck and walk himself into a state of renewed confidence.

As the night was a little chilly, he slipped on a light topcoat; and, reaching the deck, he started briskly forward. Already the air was tinted with a familiar odor—the breath of Tientsin and Shanghai and Hongkong and a hundred malodorous little ports in between.

At the forward turn of the deck he suddenly stopped. Some one was moving about stealthily in the semidarkness below, and he was astonished a moment later to see that the mysterious figure was none other than Sally Banning. She was crossing the bridge over the deck well from the forepeak, and perhaps a dozen strides behind her was another, taller figure, darkly clothed.

This second figure John presently made out, to his growing concern, to be Ho Tung. A dozen questions and answers flitted through Murray's brain. It occurred to him that here might be an explanation for Sally's aloof attitude since their day of days in Honolulu.

Ho Tung! What the devil was Sally Banning, spoiled daughter of a solid, respectable railroad president, thinking of, to be prowling about the ship at this hour with that ancient Oriental fox?

In the darkened shelter of a doorway he concealed himself and waited. He saw Sally's head appear at the ladder top on the other side of the deck. He saw her peer about, then beckon. In a few seconds Ho Tung appeared, and they clasped hands.

"Until to-morrow night!" the Chinese dignitary announced in a low voice.

"*Ding how!*" Sally said throatily.

She withdrew her hand and left him. She walked briskly, and she would pass within inches of John.

He withdrew into the most compact dimensions to which his height and breadth were adaptable, and held his breath. Sally passed him, unconscious of his scrutiny, unaware of his presence.

He waited until her footfalls retreated, then he hastened around the deck to the door of Suite A and knocked three times and again three times.

## IX

THE door was opened immediately, and Ho Tung's beady black, inscrutable eyes were staring into his. Then they narrowed with hostility, and the thin old lips came together.

"Your highness!"

"Mr. Murray!"

The mask came down again upon Ho Tung's face, and he was his suave, imperious self. Every Chinese is a Buddha.

"I understood that we were to have no contact until we reached Nanking," he remarked coldly.

John Murray entered the room and pulled the door to after him. He faced Ho Tung with hands on hips.

"What in the devil are you up to with that girl?" he snapped.

The old Chinese seated himself and smiled blandly.

"You are exercising yourself needlessly, Mr. Murray," he retorted. "I encountered her quite by accident on deck some nights ago. She could not sleep. I was lonesome and bored. I have merely used her as an antidote for my loneliness. She is a charming, delightful young woman. Is it necessary for me to make further explanations—or apologies?"

His tone and manner were deliberately insulting. They prompted a swift rise of color into the young American's face.

"I want you to keep your hands off that girl."

"Permit me to say, Mr. Murray, that I have treated Miss Banning with the utmost deference. She is a friendly little thing. She represents nothing but a bright spot in an otherwise exceedingly dull voyage. If you doubt me, why don't you question her?"

Ho Tung smiled his charming smile. The young man did not dare to question the girl; he did not dare to speak to her or to

any one else about Ho Tung—and no one knew it better than this wise old Chinese.

John Murray, with clenched fists and jaws, glared at him.

"What did you mean when you said to her, 'Until to-morrow night'?" he demanded. "How can you see her again? We dock in Shanghai at sundown, and you are leaving on the Luchow for Nanking immediately afterward."

"That is true," the tall diplomat agreed. "Perhaps I was merely observing the amenities called for by the occasion."

A sudden, sharp knocking at the door caused both men to turn quickly.

"Who," Ho Tung whispered, "is that?"

Murray was shaking his head when the knocking was repeated.

"It's O'Day," said a voice, muffled, through the panel. "Let me in. I know you're in there, Mr. Holburn-Murray. Let me in, or I'll spill the beans all over this ship!"

Ho Tung had walked quickly to his bed. From beneath the pillow he removed a long, gleaming knife.

John seized his wrist.

"No, your highness. Put it back!"

Ho Tung did not put it back. He concealed it in his robes, and the American opened the door.

The wireless operator, grinning impudently, entered. He looked from the yellow, impassive face of the Chinese to the pale, grave American.

"Well, Mr. Murray," he chirped, "do I win that Corona-Corona, or don't I?"

"What do you want?" Murray demanded impatiently.

"I wanna know what's goin' on, 'at's what I wanna know. You two guys are up to somethin', and I'm gonna be in on it or know the reason why. I've been keepin' my mouth shut and my eyes and ears open ever since we pulled outa Frisco. What I've seen I could certainly raise old Harry about, but I'm willin' to shoot straight with you if you guys are willin' to shoot straight with me."

He looked at both men expectantly, but neither spoke.

"You want some more credentials, do you?" O'Day remarked. "Well, I'll tell you what I know, and when I get through, if you want me to spill it to the American consul at Shanghai and the American legation at Peking, just holler. It's just about two-thirty. The air is clear as a bell.

I've got a powerful outfit up topside, and every land station in China is listenin' in now. If you want me to broadcast a lot of hot stuff, just keep treatin' me like a poor relation!"

"Go on!" John urged grimly.

"Now, listen! I know your other name is Jordan Ames Holburn, Mr. Murray, and we both know what would begin poppin' if they knew you were headin' back for China. And this Chinese gent here—Say! A lot of people on this ship, includin' the skipper and the purser and the steward, think you're an old Chinese merchant on your way back to Kowloon to die. Me, I know better."

"Careful!" Murray remarked.

"Wait a minute! That ain't all. If I was to tell that Banning girl's old man that this Chink and her have been sneakin' up into the bow for long confabs every night, there'd be some more hell poppin'. I've been losin' a lot of sleep keepin' an eye on you two, and I want to know right now where I stand."

"I'll tell you what you're standing on," John Murray said earnestly. "It's name is dynamite."

"Yeah?" Bub's sparkling blue eyes darted toward Ho Tung. "Say, what has he got up his sleeve?"

"It's merely a long, sharp dagger," John informed him. "Men in our position aren't safe to monkey with, Bub. If you'll take my advice you'll clear out of here and get to bed and give those eyes and ears of yours a rest."

"Yeah? Well, let me tell you somethin'. I'm not goin' to clear out of here until I'm let in on the party. You think I don't savvy how easy and simple it would be to stick that knife into me and shove me overboard? Listen, I've got a brain, kid. My assistant is standin' against a stanchion down the deck. He's got his eyes glued on this door. He don't know what's goin' on, but he knows I'm in this room, and if I don't come outa here alive, one awful holler is goin' to go up. And what's more, he's got a sealed envelope in his pocket that he's goin' to deliver to the skipper if I should happen to disappear overboard. He gives it back to me and I tear it up, if and when I come out. Now, are we goin' to talk, gents, or aren't we?"

John Murray looked at Ho Tung. The old Chinese suavely addressed the determined radio man.



"What is your proposition?"

"I don't want a dime," Bub replied. "I told Mr. Murray the second or third day out of Frisco that I had spotted who he was, and I told him all I wanted was to get in on whatever excitement there was. Ain't that the honest truth, Mr. Murray?"

John nodded.

"It is," he affirmed. "And, as I mentioned at the time, your highness, I am in favor of taking him with me to Nanking. He is a scrappy kid, and I may need a bodyguard before I return to a treaty port."

Ho Tung was slowly nodding.

"Very well," he agreed.

"This gentleman," John told Bub, "is Prince Ho Tung. He is the only direct surviving heir of the Manchu throne. It is his plan to ascend that throne as the next Emperor of China."

"Gee! And you're backin' him?"

"To the best of my ability, I am. We think that the time is ripe for the overthrow of the present republic. China, as you know, is now in a state of revolution from Siberia to Tibet. We believe that the Chinese are prepared to abandon republican ideas and to return to the old régime. As you know, I am thoroughly in favor of a dictatorship. I know that China needs a dictator, and I am sure his highness, Prince Ho Tung, is the man for the occasion."

"And I suppose," the freckled imp said, "that you're to be prime minister."

"On the contrary," John Murray denied, "I am going to get out of China as soon as I possibly can. The mandarins of southern China are a little skeptical of Prince Ho Tung's sincerity of purpose. Their representatives are to meet his highness and me in Nanking. The sole object of my journey is to convince them that Prince Ho Tung deserves to be made Emperor of China."

"How about northern China?" Bub asked shrewdly.

"There are a hundred thousand soldiers between Nanking and Peking who will rally to Prince Ho Tung's standard."

"It must have meant an awful lot of 'squeeze,'" said O'Day, who knew Chinese business and political methods.

"I am not concerned with that," Murray declared.

"And what do you get out of it, Mr. Murray?"

"Not a thing, Bub. I am doing this because I believe it is the only solution for China's troubles."

"Without his help," Prince Ho Tung pointed out, "I could do nothing. It is safe to say that if I am placed on the Chinese throne, he will be directly responsible. Without the backing of the south China mandarins, my backers in northern China will be too timid to act. Mr. Murray's presence is indispensable."

Bub nodded understandingly and looked at John Murray with a queer grin.

"Why ain't you goin' to stay in China and get in on the nice pickin's when the prince here climbs onto the throne?"

"I'm no longer interested in Chinese politics," Murray replied.

"Tired of adventurin', eh?"

"Exactly."

"Gee, but you're a hard guy to dope out, Mr. Murray! You mean, you want to get back to America instead of stayin' here and seein' a lot of free fireworks?"

John Murray smiled tightly and nodded.

"And I'll bet, between just us three, you ain't any too keen to go to Nanking!" O'Day remarked.

Prince Ho Tung uttered a sound that resembled a snort. In fact, it may have been a snort. Bub looked at him.

"Prince," he said, "it certainly is tough. This guy could lick China with one hand. As a matter of fact, he did, didn't he? I'll say he did! Gosh darn it, prince, it's all wrong!"

"Wrong!" his imperial highness exploded. "He would rather stay in America and write books on plumbing than come to the aid of a nation that is bleeding to death?"

"I tried to stem that flow of blood, your highness," John reminded him, "and, as a result, my name is on the black list of the three strongest men in China."

"Ain't scared, are you, Mr. Murray?" O'Day insinuated.

"No, I'm not frightened, Bub. I've simply discovered what you will discover for yourself in a few years—that tilting at windmills is a fool's game. I had a stomach full of it. Besides, I'm thirty-one—"

"Which is the very threshold of life!" Prince Ho Tung cried.

"At least," John said, "it is the time at which a man with sense maps out what future is left to him. I decided two years ago that the time had come to stop being

a rampant idealist, and to make my mark where conservatism and old-fashioned plugging counted. I am, after all, a publicity expert. I love the work. And China doesn't need publicity experts. What China needs is a dictator with a million machine guns to back him up. Perhaps your highness is that dictator. It is certain that I am not one of the machine guns."

"Well, by golly, I am!" Bub declared himself.

"And one of these days you will burn your little fingers and you will be a wiser child," the authority on publicity informed him.

"What China needs," Prince Ho Tung put in hotly, "is men of your caliber—men who are not selfish and grasping. China is now at the mercy of greedy men. Let them have *Ling-Chi*—"

"That's going pretty fast!" John broke in angrily.

"What in hell is *Ling-Chi*?" Bub eagerly demanded.

"The death of a thousand cuts, Bub. You see, we can't be too sure even of his imperial highness."

Prince Ho Tung had lost the last vestige of his Buddhistic composure.

"It is no time to bandy words," he announced. "China must be restored to her power among nations, and it cannot be done without ruthless methods. If you will follow me through to Peking, I will put the entire foreign problem into your hands. What you say will be backed by my absolute authority."

John Murray was shaking his head vigorously.

"Your highness, it is useless to try to bait me. I will not stay a moment longer than is necessary for me to deliver my message to the southern Chinese."

"You are even reluctant to do that, are you not?"

"I am!"

"I honestly believe you could be diverted from that trip to Nanking!"

"It is possible," John agreed with a hard smile.

Ho Tung lifted his trembling, clawlike hands to a level with Murray's nose. He clenched them and shook them.

"Yes! You are reluctant! I offer you millions, the opportunity to become the great white savior of China—and you speak of returning to America—to write

another book on plumbing. You—you piker!"

"Listen, prince," Bub broke in, "you may know this bird a lot better than I do, but my hunch is that he's the kind that's dog-goned dangerous when aroused. If he wants to count himself out, let him. He's game to chin-chin with the south China mob. We'll let him breeze if he wants to. You can count me in to the bitter end. And all I want is the job of director of communications; that means all radio plants and all land lines—at a nifty salary. Do I get it?"

"If you stand by me to the end—yes."

"Well, then, that's settled. I am the director of communications of the entire Chinese Empire. Mr. Murray, you'd better change your mind. We can have our private offices right next door to each other!"

"With your imagination, Bub," Murray said with a pale grin, "you won't need anything in China but telepathy. Now, what are our plans, your highness?"

"You will proceed to Nanking by the night express," Ho Tung stated. "Mr. O'Day will accompany you. I will take the Luchow, and we should arrive at about the same time. Go directly to Ling Gow's tavern, and there, let us hope, the spark will be ignited that will set China aflame from Mongolia to India!"

The two Americans thereupon left him. On deck, some distance from the door of Suite A, Bub said:

"Let's go up to my shanty and sort of chew this thing over. If you are a piker, and that guy is a prince, then I am old Mother Goose in disguise. But it looks like a big time in Nanking, and I'm gonna give my automatic another good oilin'. All my life, Mr. Murray, I have been cravin' a moment like this."

"You are very young, Bub."

"Is that so? Say, just where does this Banning girl work into all this? Is she down on the list as the empress dowager or somethin'? At the rate his imperial whosis is handin' out fancy jobs, maybe she's gonna be Queen of Tibet!"

"I'm going to talk to her," John said.

"And another thing that's pressin' down hard on what some people 'd call my mind—why didn't you sock him when he called you a piker? I wouldn't take that from the Emperor of America himself, not with your record."

"It is true," John declared.

"Humph!" Bub snorted.

# X

JOHN MURRAY devoted the next day, until the Vandalia swam through a clutter of fishing sampans and junks at the mouth of the Whangpo-kiang, to ascertaining from Sally Banning, without betraying himself, just what was in the wind.

He found her more unapproachable than at any other time since her strange, aloof attitude had made its appearance. Sally was pale and nervous.

Something, he was sure, was on her mind. When she met his eyes, as she did only two or three times, hers were blurred and misty and strange.

"What are you going to do in Shanghai?" he asked.

She replied that she probably would do the usual thing—shopping, sight-seeing and dancing at the big hotel.

"You don't think there's a chance of your stopping over awhile in Shanghai, Sally?"

It was one of the occasions when she met his eyes.

"You know we are routed straight through to Hongkong," she replied.

"I thought perhaps you'd changed your mind. I have to go to Peking and Tientsin. It would be nice to know that you were waiting here when I came back."

"Why should I wait for you to come back?" Sally coldly inquired.

"Well," he explained, "it would be mighty nice to see you, and I hate to think of your going out of my life—like this. I suppose it means forever."

"I suppose so," Sally said with an air of indifference.

"You don't mind," he pressed, "at all?"

"I don't see," the girl declared impatiently, "what good it's going to be to open all of this up again, John. I thought we had decided to let things drop."

"I didn't think after—well, after how we felt—you'd let them drop quite so easily."

"Maybe it wasn't as easy as you think."

"I think," John said, "that you've something else on your mind, that's what I think. It isn't some other man, is it, Sally?"

And, when she hesitated, he added: "You can be honest with me, you know, Sally. Don't forget what you said in the

bow that night about being a square shooter. It isn't any other man on this ship, for instance, is it?"

"It isn't anybody," Sally said sharply. And then she promptly softened. "I am a square shooter. I told you I liked you more than any man I've ever known. I'm not taking it back now."

"Then there is still some chance for me?"

"I wish you wouldn't ask me to talk about it, John. You're you and I'm me. Let's let the dead rest in peace."

"Do you expect to be long in Hongkong?"

She hesitated before answering that.

"You'll have to ask dad. This is his itinerary. I'm nothing but his yes-girl."

"I wish you'd say there was more of a chance of your being my yes-girl." He saw her brows drawing darkly together. "I'll drop it, Sally. You can reach me by cable at the Astor, Shanghai, in case you have a change of heart. I'll adore you to the grave, Sally. Carve that on your heart!"

"It's much too flinty," the girl declared lightly. "We're getting pretty close in, aren't we? I've got some things to do. Will you excuse me? Good-by and good luck, John, if we don't see each other after we reach Shanghai."

"Why shouldn't we see each other?" he demanded, suddenly and suspiciously alert. It was the first useful hint he had so far pried out of her.

"Well, you're taking the evening train for Tientsin or Amoy or somewhere, aren't you?"

His suspicions subsided, but with puckered brows and narrowed eyes he watched her go toward her cabin. It was harder than ever to believe that she had cooled so suddenly toward him.

Then Bub O'Day sidled up to him. The radio operator's eyes were twinkling with excitement.

"All set, chief?" he asked guardedly.

"We'll slip ashore," John said, "an hour after we dock—if the coast is clear. You'll run ahead for rickshas, and we'll go directly to the station. Did you get that radio off for a compartment?"

"Trust me!" said the imp. "And I've told the Shanghai station that I'm apt to come down at any minute with St. Vitus dance, and to have a relief operator ready in case I'm not able to do my stuff when

we clear for Manila. Now, supposin' you lamp some old enemy on the dock? Do we quit cold?"

"It all depends."

"You certainly ain't rarin' to go to Nanking, are you, Mr. Murray?"

"I am not."

"Well, his imperial whosis smelled it, too, and I think you've got him worried. He won't be happy until he sees you in Ling Gow's tavern. If nothin' happens between now and when we dock, I meet you in the compound outside the godown with two rickshas just one hour after we dock. Here's hopin' nothin' goes wrong. *Ding how, chief!*"

"*Ding how!*" John said, and Bub left him.

The Vandalia was moving more slowly now; the tide was running out of the Whangpo, and on every side were junks and sampans bound on all manner of mysterious errands into the Yellow Sea. The cable ship came abreast and fell astern as the Vandalia, with both engines driving at full speed, fought the yellow torrent.

In the blue mist of dusk, John could make out the outlines of the buildings on the Bund. He went below to his stateroom as the Vandalia, having acquired a tug forward, and another one aft, began the delicate and dangerous maneuver of warping alongside the landing stage.

The porthole in his stateroom was on the starboard side, fairly amidships, and from this point he could sweep the pier with his eyes. Back again in China! Two years previously he had vowed that he would never put foot again upon this soil.

He packed his bags with slow deliberateness, made sure that his automatic was loaded with a shell ready in the firing chamber, and slipped it into a hip pocket.

The yelping of coolies came closer. They were singing their monotonous "Hai-ho—hai-ho"—the work song of the rivers—as they made fast the hawsers to thick clusters of piles on the greasy brown bank.

The light was nearly gone now, and the gangplank was up and in place. He saw a man in a light gray suit come running across the floats and on up into the ship; wondered about him; forgot him.

His heart was pounding uneasily. Well—Nanking to-morrow. The Luchow should be alongside by this time; Ho Tung should be aboard her and on his way.

He waited. Darkness settled down.

People were leaving the ship—a chattering stream; others were coming aboard. John Murray waited for the stipulated hour to pass. How slowly it dragged! How taut his nerves were drawn!

A brief few minutes remained of the hour when a sharp knocking occurred at his door. John sprang up from his bunk, his right hand going back mechanically toward his right hip pocket.

The pounding was repeated, then a voice called:

"Mr. Murray, are you in there? It's Jimmy."

John opened the door instantly. Jimmy, the deck steward, grinning amiably, held an envelope in his hand.

"Miss Banning left this with me when she went ashore," he explained. "She acted kind of funny about it, Mr. Murray. She said I was to give it to you just when you were leaving the ship, and she left one for Mr. Banning, too. But I was afraid I'd miss you, so here it is."

Murray tore open the envelope and removed the folded sheet of paper it contained. His fingers were suddenly cold and shaking. The note said:

DEAR JOHN:

Please forgive me for the way I have acted. I will probably never see you again, and if I don't, please don't think too harshly of me. I really meant what I said. I like you more than any other man I have ever known, but I really don't think we are meant for each other. I am leaving in a hurry to visit a girl in Peking. She came aboard and rushed me off, as there is just time to catch the Peking express.

Affectionately,

SALLY.

John looked up from the letter to the waiting steward.

"Are you sure Miss Banning went ashore, Jimmy?"

"Well, sir, she said she was goin' ashore."

"Did you see her go ashore?"

"No, Mr. Murray; I don't recollect that I did."

"Have you delivered Mr. Banning's note?"

"Yes, sir; I just handed it to him."

"Very well, Jimmy. If you see him, tell him to come down here at once. I want to talk to him on a most important matter."

"I'll tell him, Mr. Murray."

John closed the door and sat down with the note in his hand. He read it again.



In his mind there was absolutely no doubt as to what Sally had done.

She had slipped aboard the Luchow with Prince Ho Tung when the launch had pulled alongside. By this time that swift craft was nearly at the mouth of the river, preparing to turn and make the run up the Yangtze. This was dangerous for the American girl in more ways than one.

He waited, with a sinking heart, for Mr. Banning. Bub would have to count his fingers for awhile. Presently a knock came, and he opened the door to admit the railroad president.

Mr. Banning was pale and agitated. He had a note in his hand. In silence he thrust it into John's hand. It said:

DEAREST DADDY:

Please don't be sore. I've tried my best to find you, but can't. Marjorie Landis has just come aboard and insists that I go with her to Peking. So I'm flying. We've just time to catch the night train. Go on with your trip. You'll get word from me at Hongkong.

Your devoted  
SAL.

John Murray looked up into Mr. Banning's suffering eyes.

"It's Sally's handwriting, but it isn't Sally," the father said. "It's fishy. There's something wrong, John. If anything happens to that child—well, you know she means more than life to me. For days she's been acting strangely. And to-day she was so nervous that she jumped at a sound, and she kept looking at me in the strangest way. There's some mystery here, and I'm going to get at the bottom of it."

"Read this," John said, and handed Mr. Banning the note Sally had written to him.

"Just as fishy as mine," the railroad president pronounced when he had finished reading it.

"I don't agree with you," John declared, trying desperately to make his voice calm and level. "I'll wager she had it all cooked up with this Peking girl days ago—by radio or by letter before she left home. She wanted a lark.

"To tell the truth," he added earnestly, trying to make the blossoming lie appear as convincing as he humanly could, "I think Sally was dying to have some fun over here on her own hook. She's rebelling against any form of discipline; you know that."

"Indeed I do know it!" Mr. Banning agreed feelingly.

"I honestly think there's nothing to

worry about," John continued. "I'm sure she's on that Peking train this moment. I'm taking it myself, you know. Mr. Banning, it would be a waste of your time to go down to the train and knock on every compartment door—and it's a long train. Let me attend to that. When I've found her, and verified this strange story, I'll wire you from a way station."

Mr. Banning looked at him anxiously.

"If I thought it would accomplish anything to go down there—"

"It wouldn't. I can attend to it. And I'll wire you."

"Supposing she isn't aboard? Supposing something has happened to her? Good God, this is China, and—"

"Don't worry," John brusquely headed him off.

"I have perfect confidence in you, John," Mr. Banning said gratefully, "and I wish that Sally hadn't been so unkind to you. You know, I can't think of anything that would make me feel happier than a telegram saying she's safe, except one saying that you've married her."

"And nothing would make me happier than to send you that telegram, Mr. Banning," John assured him with a tired grin. "Now, I've got to go. I've just time to make that train."

"What do you advise me to do, John, in case you don't find her on that train?"

"Notify the American consul, and wire the American legation, and give the story to every reporter in Shanghai," Murray replied promptly.

"If you find her, John, don't let her out of your sight."

"I won't, Mr. Banning."

They went on deck. At the gangway they shook hands, and Murray started down. At the foot of the gangplank he saw Jimmy, the steward, waiting with his two bags.

The young man in light gray whom John had seen go aboard when the *Vandalia* docked, and who had evidently gone ashore again, came running up the plank when Murray was halfway down. The stranger had penetrating gray eyes and a large thin nose. He grasped John by the arm.

"Are you John Murray?" he snapped out.

"No!"

"Well, I'll be damned," the young man declared. "You certainly answer to his description. I—I beg your pardon."

"It's all right," John said, and hastened down.

At the top of the gangplank the young man in gray encountered Mr. Banning.

"Excuse me," he said, "but do you know John Murray when you see him?"

"I know him well," the railroad man replied. "That's John Murray you just passed."

"That tall fellow in the gray overcoat and brown felt hat?"

"Yes; that's Murray."

"Well, for crying out loud!" the young man in gray exclaimed. "He just told me he wasn't John Murray."

Mr. Banning looked at him suspiciously and walked down the deck. His mind wouldn't accommodate any more mysteries.

The young man in gray was looking wildly about him. A deck steward came out of a corridor.

"Listen," the stranger implored, "do you know John Murray when you see him?"

"Yes, sir; I do."

"Is that Murray walking across the float behind the steward with the two bags?"

The steward looked.

"Sure! Yes, sir; that's Mr. Murray."

"Well, I'll be damned!" the man in gray confirmed, and hastened after.

In the purple gloom of the compound, John found Bub quarreling with two ricksha coolies. He naturally would be quarreling with them. He had been holding them here an hour, and the coolies, it appeared, had errands elsewhere.

"All set, chief?"

The man in gray arrived perspiringly on the scene as Murray was climbing into his ricksha. Bub immediately dismounted from his. The man in gray had John firmly by the arm. He panted out:

"Say, what's the big idea? Do you think I don't know who you are?"

He stopped. The rays of an arc light in the godown were playing upon the stern features of John Murray, and the young man in gray was staring at him with widening eyes.

"Oh, boy!" he moaned. "My mistake."

"You're makin' all kinds of mistakes, sucker," Bub growled.

"Your name isn't Murray, after all."

"I'll bust you wide open," O'Day threatened, "if you don't pipe down. And it is Murray."

"It wasn't Murray—two years ago in Peking!" yelled the offensive stranger.

Bub struck him vigorously on the point of the chin. The man in gray staggered heavily against the elephant iron wall and sagged to his knees.

"Make it snappy, chief!"

Murray sprang into his ricksha and barked:

"Makee small time that railroad house, you savvy? You go man-man! My talkee big cumshaw!"

"Hai, mastah!" the wraith between the shafts responded, and they were off.

The man in gray recovered his equilibrium, came to his feet, and feebly brushed himself off. He saw the two vehicles flit from the end of the godown alley into the street. He wiped his brow with a large silk handkerchief and swore.

"Wantee licksha?" a whining voice near by in the murk entreated.

The man in gray leaped into the vehicle. He struck his shin on the edge of the floor board as he did so. He moaned curses and clasped the aching bone with two hands.

"Follow those two rickshas, you savvy?" he snarled at the coolie.

## XI

THE Shanghai railroad station was clamorous with the sounds of the impending departure of the Peking express when John Murray and his red-haired Man Friday arrived and alighted. They hastened through the gate and found their compartment in a car marked "Wagon-Lits—Nanking," just as the train was starting. Safely inside the cubicle assigned to them, they expelled twin breaths of relief.

Bub O'Day made something of a business of lighting a large, black cigar which, when aglow, gave off a perfume reminiscent of burning rubbish.

"Well, chief," he declared, as he removed from his hip pocket an automatic pistol that might have been appropriately mounted on wheels, and tossed it upon the lower berth, "nobody shot at us, and nobody threw knives our way. We are off to what you might roughly call a good runnin' start, if we don't count that guy back there who got so familiar. Who is the bird, Mr. Murray?"

"I can't quite place him. Peking, he said. Secret Service, I think. Peking is crawling with them, and every one of them has my dossier."

"How far from the station is Ling Gow's tavern?"

"It's only down on the river."

"That's the Yangtze, isn't it?"

"Yes. Bub, Miss Banning has disappeared."

O'Day all but swallowed his cigar.

"Oh, my gosh!" he moaned, and blinked his freckled lids. "How—how do you mean she disappeared?"

"She left the ship before we did with a girl from Peking, so we gathered from notes she left me and her father."

"You mean on this train?"

"On this train."

"That's a flock of apple sauce," the radio expert declared. "I was one of the first ashore. I got those two coolies and held 'em. I saw every passenger who left the ship. She'd have had to go through that compound to get a ricksha, or if she took a taxi she'd have had to go down to the end of the lane. She'd have had to pass me. She didn't pass me."

"What happened," John told him, "was that she went down the river with Ho Tung."

Bub was temporarily speechless. His cigar sagged from a pendulous lower lip.

"You didn't see her get away?" he got out finally.

"No; I'm only assuming that she went with him. But, then, I know Chinese methods."

"It don't hold water, chief. Ho Tung is goin' to Nanking, and we're goin' to meet him there. He oughta know damned well that if he lays a yellow hand on your girl friend you'll carve his heart right out!"

"No, Bub. He persuaded her to go along with him because he knew that if I knew she was on her way to Nanking with him, nothing could keep me from Nanking. Extremely simple and extremely Chinese."

"Yeah, and her old man is gonna go squealing all over Shanghai, and we're all gonna get ourselves messed up."

"I did some fast lying to Mr. Banning," Murray explained. "I convinced him that she was telling the truth; that she was having a lark—going to Peking with this girl she knew. What can he do? If I told him the truth, he'd come storming up to Nanking and hell would break loose. You can't go into a camp of a hundred thousand Chinese soldiers—who are always thirsting to slit throats—clamoring for a lost white girl. I had to think fast, and for every one

concerned. Now Ho Tung has the whip hand. You see, damn him, he can make me stay in China if he wishes. We're going into his territory, Bub."

"You aren't even goin' to bother to see she's not on this train?"

"We might take a glance at the Peking car. Will you come along?"

"I sure will!" the freckled imp said, and slipped the heavy pistol into his pocket.

Sally Banning was not in the Peking car. The conductor was emphatic in his declaration that no young American woman of any description was aboard the express. John Murray nevertheless dispatched a telegram to Mr. Banning, for the sake of that anxious parent's peace of mind. It read:

Have found Sally safe and sound. Advise you to stop over in Shanghai until I deliver her into your hands. May be a week. JOHN.

## XII

THE first of the hostile blows to be dealt to Sally Banning's romantic ardor and longing for exotic adventure occurred before the express cruiser Luchow raced into the cross chop of the Yellow Sea and aimed her razor prow in the general direction of the Yangtze-kiang delta.

The Luchow had been built for speed alone. She was a rakish little craft, forty feet over all, with a beam of ten, and virtually all the inboard space was employed for her three engines and her fuel tanks.

Her pilot house was a tiny square box with hardly enough room for the wheelsman and the navigator. The only accommodations consisted of a single stateroom large enough to contain a single bunk. To be sure, this room was fitted out in mahogany with nickel trim.

Sally went aboard simply by stepping from the Vandalia's orlop deck to the Luchow's main and only deck. She scuttled down through the pilot house.

A wizened old Chinese in faded blue rags made frantic efforts to head her off, but when she mentioned the name Ho Tung, he subsided, seeming to become more wizened than before.

She went down a narrow, steep ladder, and found herself surrounded by white enameled gasoline tanks. The Luchow, she soon discovered, was all stomach and muscle.

But Sally found the little stateroom.

She placed her hand bag on the built-in bunk, sat down, and waited.

Presently she heard the thumping of feet on deck; assumed this to be the tread of Ho Tung; voices resounded. They were shrill voices in the babble of China. Then English words reached her ears.

"Are you down there, Miss Banning?"

"I am—Mr. Ho Tung," Sally replied in thrilled tones.

More machine gun Chinese remarks followed. Three giant motors made a sound resembling "*Whoof!*" And the Luchow was racing along the Whangpo—toward Heaven only knew what thrilling adventures.

The girl listened to the close throb of the engines, and estimated, after a dizzying glance from a tiny porthole, that the craft was leaving Shanghai astern at the rate of forty miles an hour.

Presently the wizened old Chinese she had quelled in the pilot house came below and entered her room. He spoke a sentence in Chinese and picked up her hand bag. Sally watched him with lively curiosity.

He placed her bag in the hall with a gesture that implied that he was not sensitive to the possibility of its contents being breakable. It chanced that they were not, but he might, Sally thought, have been a little more considerate.

She was aware of a faint astonishment when, reappearing, the old Chinese in faded ragged blue brought into the tiny room two large suitcases.

"Ho Tung's?" she asked distinctly and very slowly.

The old fellow nodded, then beckoned with his shaven head for her to withdraw from the stateroom.

Sally, wondering, withdrew. As she did, Ho Tung came below.

"Is everything all right?" she wanted to know.

She had to shout; the engines were making so much noise.

He only nodded curtly. He pushed past her, entered the stateroom, and closed the door after him. She heard the little brass bolt shoot home.

The wizened old Chinese was looking at her with an unfathomable expression.

"Where do I sleep?" she inquired.

He didn't get that; shook his head, and babbled in Chinese. A tall young coolie with swollen cheeks and almond, puffy

eyes came shuffling along the narrow passage. He looked strange in overalls.

"Do you understand English?" Sally asked him.

He nodded sullenly. "Me savvy littly bit."

"Well," she shouted, "I want to know where my room is."

"Only one loom, missy," the engine room man said. "Him take it."

"But where do I sleep?" she wailed.

"Me no savvy," was his unsatisfactory rejoinder.

Indignantly, Sally started to knock on the stateroom door. She thought it was highly inconsiderate of Mr. Ho Tung to take the only room on the boat. But before she could touch the panel, the young engineer had her wrist in a firm, hot, greasy clutch.

"No—no!" he said sharply.

"Well, I think this is pretty thick," Sally retorted.

"No makee bhobbery fo' plince," the defender of the portal declared.

"Prince?" Sally repeated. "Is he a prince?"

She had suspected something of the sort all along.

"King of China," she was informed by the coolie.

"Ah!" Sally gasped.

This made it a little easier to understand. Ho Tung was a prince; he was the next Emperor of China!

But this gratifying and thrilling information did not make the draft blowing through the passage any warmer, nor did it diminish the sickening fumes of raw and burning gasoline. The Luchow was beginning to bob about, and Sally supposed that they were now out into the Yellow Sea.

"No knock?" the young Chinese with the puffed cheeks questioned sternly.

"No, I won't disturb his highness," Sally promised.

She wondered where she would have to stay. She had, she believed, seen all there was to see of the Luchow, but she continued her investigation. Her original discovery was soon confirmed.

The Luchow consisted of a tiny pilot house, a small stateroom, a great many square tanks containing gasoline, and a huge compartment full of machinery. There was no place for her to go.

Well, she did not mind. After all, Prince Ho Tung was a pretty old man, and he



must have his comforts. His well-being was more important than hers.

This line of reasoning satisfied her for awhile, but presently the motion of the boat grew more and more pronounced. At unabated speed it was hurling itself through a rising cross chop, and, as the darkness of night came down, the draft rushing through the little passageway became colder and damper.

Sally Banning had not been ill or uneasy during the entire crossing of the Pacific. She thought she was immune to the ravages of seasickness, but she presently underwent a change of mind.

The Luchow would spring into the air, or so it seemed, and come down with a sickening crash. Then the craft would lurch violently to one side and reel in a ghastly fashion to the other.

Sally had fetched along only a very light coat, and she was soon brought to the realization that people who set out adventuring must prepare themselves accordingly. She was beginning to shiver in that chilly draft, and occasionally a little spray would float along to where she stood, partly crouching, beside one of the gasoline tanks.

There was not even anything for her to sit on. She decided to try the pilot house, and bracing her hands against the enameled tanks, she made her way forward. Here the motion was even worse.

As she climbed, a desperate step at a time, up the little ladder, she felt more and more giddy. She knew that, in a few seconds, she was going to be dreadfully ill.

Her anxious hands found two rails, and by means of these she pulled herself up the rest of the way into the little square box. Spray came rattling in a heavy hail on the sloping glass as she put up her head.

She saw in the dim luminance provided by a little bulb in the ceiling that there was no room for her here. One man sat on a side seat and held the wheel; another occupied the other side seat and looked grimly through the drenched glass at a feathery yellow sea.

Sally withdrew. She made her way back down the passage to where her bag was, and with a little moan, sank down.

The fumes of gasoline were stronger here. She experienced the premonitory pangs of a headache. She shivered with cold.

She placed two hands upon her stomach to comfort it—but it was beyond comfort-

ing. It soon became intolerant, then entirely unmanageable.

The discomfort of the gentle adventuress increased. Wrapping her light coat about her, she stretched out on her side in the passage and pressed both hands to her throbbing temples.

Her resentment against Prince Ho Tung was increasing. It was cruel of him to treat her like this. After all, she was a delicately reared girl, unused to such discomforts.

Even if he was a Manchu prince, she had more right to that stateroom than he had. Princes were supposed to be gallant; they were expected to possess the very soul of courtesy. He was probably very cozy and warm in that little stateroom.

Her own comfortable stateroom on the Vandalia now appeared before Sally's dazed eyes as if in a vision. How snug it had been! How warm and comfortable the bed was!

She tried desperately to reason with herself. She had turned adventuress, hadn't she? She was willing to sacrifice a few things, wasn't she, for the good of dear old downtrodden China? She was!

Such reasoning, however, did not remove the chill or the dampness from the small gale that came rushing down the corridor, nor did it improve the dejected state of her stomach. Her teeth were chattering, and she knew that her lips were blue with the cold.

Through wretched eyes she saw a man with a red-lacquered tray coming toward her from the engine room. It sustained an assortment of little bowls and cups and bottles.

Something warm and substantial to eat, Sally believed, would make her feel better. She sat up. She even essayed a faint smile.

But the man's murky eyes hardly rested on her. He was knocking at Ho Tung's door. The door opened and the tray disappeared within.

Sally called to the man. She made gestures indicative of her need for nourishment. He looked at her with dull curiosity; finally nodded his comprehension and went aft.

He returned in a few minutes with a single large white bowl. What appeared to be wooden darning needles protruded from it.

This he placed on the floor five feet away from Sally, with a gesture of contempt.

She crawled over and looked into the bowl. It contained nothing but boiled rice and a pair of chopsticks!

She sank back on her side indignantly. She was not even to enjoy the same fare as Prince Ho Tung!

Sally crawled to where her hand bag was, and gave herself up to feelings of misery and despair. Of course everything would be righted when they reached Nanking. She would be assigned her own suite and servants.

A faint doubt suddenly entered her mind, but she promptly dismissed it. Ho Tung had told her repeatedly that she was a beautiful, clever girl, and would help him in restoring China to her dignity among nations. Yes; everything would be righted in Nanking.

The wind blowing down the passage became colder. Water in a thin layer was now collecting from the spray that came leaking down from the improperly inclosed pilot house. Sally's light coat absorbed a great deal of it.

She decided to stand up for awhile. A violent heave to starboard threw her to her hands and knees. Her teeth were going like castanets. Her stomach was a leaden ball bounding around inside of her. And now her clothing was wet through.

She could stand it no longer. On hands and knees she crawled to Ho Tung's door. With a feeble fist she pounded. And, after an interval, the door was opened and his imperial highness peered down at her from cold, black, unsympathetic eyes.

Behind him she saw the cozy, delightful little stateroom. How warm and cheery it looked! A steam radiator hissed contentedly in it, and the light with which it glowed was golden and warm.

"Mr. Ho Tung," she panted. "I mean, Prince Ho Tung, really, I think it's pretty thick, your taking that room and letting me freeze out here. I think the least you can do is to let me have that room."

The prince, without a word, closed the door and shot the bolt.

Sally sank back and looked dazedly at the door. It was utterly unbelievable! This was not the kindly, whimsical gentleman who had pleaded with her to give her all for China!

Even if Sally had been the crying kind, she was beyond tears now. She began to feel, however, desperately afraid.

Just what fate was in store for her?

During those romantic moonlit nights in the bow of the *Vandalia*, she had seen only the bright, the glamorous side of the picture.

A feeling of incredulity settled upon her. It could not be she, Sally Banning, daughter of one of the richest men in California, who was being subjected to these indignities, these insults.

Even the bitter, cruel actualities of cold and wet and seasickness and pain became unreal. She was only living through a nightmare from which she would presently awake.

She told herself, over and over, that everything would be all right in Nanking. She would be given the consideration there that was her due. Between sheets of silk or satin she would rest and recover from this suffering.

Sally did not fall asleep. Rather, she sank into a state of numbed consciousness, a little huddle of feminine misery on the wet floor.

The Luchow plunged on through the storm on the Yellow Sea, and Sally enjoyed a compensating dream. She dreamed that she was home again, that she was in her soft, luxurious bed.

She was awakened by a pawing hand. It took some seconds for her to gather herself together. In every joint she ached from the buffeting. Her stomach felt dead. Her face felt hot.

Dimly she realized that she was catching cold. She was shivering. The hand continued to paw her.

She started to sit up. The puffed face of the engine room boy was above her, leering. It was his greasy hand that was pawing her.

"Nice 'Melican gal," he said.

Sally Banning expressed the entire content of her pent up emotions in a single scream and a single blow. She struck the coolie furiously in the face, and he retreated.

Then it was that Sally started to cry. The tears came in a hot, stormy flood. Abused, sick, helpless—she regretted very bitterly that she had embarked on this adventure.

She now realized the truth, but only part of the truth. She was a pawn in the large affairs of Prince Ho Tung. He had taken her along for some purpose—some mysterious, sinister purpose.

She was not the beautiful, clever, gifted

woman he had repeatedly assured her she was—or he would not be giving her this kind of treatment. He was showing her in the plainest terms that he had no respect for her, no regard for her feelings, no thought for her comfort.

Her free, fine, soaring spirit of adventure was driven out, at least temporarily, leaving behind it a terribly frightened, wet, sick, bruised, wretched girl.

And on that dismal note Sally fell into the sleep of exhaustion.

### XIII

SALLY'S return to wakefulness was a dreary business of aches and groans. The engines were roaring; the air was still odorous with the fumes of the fuel, but the Luchow was, she soon discovered, on an even keel.

She opened her bag and found a clean handkerchief and blew her nose. She had taken a frightful cold, and in her hand mirror she hardly recognized that pink-nosed, white-cheeked, blue-lipped specter as herself.

Her hair was in limp strings. Her eyes were glazed. Oh, she didn't care!

She stood up stiffly. Every joint protested. And she knew that she was black and blue all over from last night's buffeting.

But she didn't care! Her first waking thought was the one with which she had fallen asleep: Ho Tung had buncoed her.

Sally made her way forward along the passageway and climbed the ladder. It was raining, a cold, dismal rain that beat down on the Yangtze-kiang and made drabness of its picturesqueness. Fine veils of spray jutted out from the boat's bow.

For some minutes Sally stood at the stairhead, looking through the misty windows at the passing dreariness. Then her knees began to knock together.

She descended. She felt weak and dizzy and feverish. Sniffing, she sat down beside her hand bag again.

A little later she suffered again the indignity of comparing the caste of meals. The red lacquer tray, heaped with good, warm things to eat, was tendered to the occupant of the stateroom, while to the girl was fairly flung, as one flings a bone to a dog, a bowl of sticky rice.

Sally mustered up enough courage to eat some of it. She had always thought that rice was rice; she was now forced to the

conclusion that there was rice and rice—and probably rice.

It amused her in a grim way for a time to try to convey lumps of the gluey, tasteless stuff to her mouth by means of the chopsticks. She might have been more or less amused to know that the rice which had gone in to Prince Ho Tung was mandarin rice, or number one rice—the finest rice which grows on China's paddy fields—and that the rice served to her was coolie rice, the lowest grade obtainable.

She tired presently of her sport, and settled down to await developments. The romantic spirit of yesterday, the zest for high adventure, had not yet returned, but her American spunkiness was by no means squelched.

If Prince Ho Tung was treating her, or having her treated, as the customs of his country dictated, she would soon let him understand that she would not tolerate such discourtesy. When they were ashore, in Nanking, she would demand from him, not an explanation of the humiliation to which she had been subjected, but a definite admission as regards his future plans for her.

And if he was not prepared to give her the kind of treatment a girl of her social position was entitled to, she would make trouble for him. She had in her possession already certain vital secrets.

Somehow, if he tried to keep her prisoner, she would communicate with the outside; she would broadcast his schemes to the world. Certainly, there would be white people—Americans, English—in Nanking to whom she could appeal for help.

This brave determination was made in Sally's mind before she saw Nanking.

Eventually the Luchow slowed to a crawl, and suddenly the engines were still. Sally listened and heard a scraping sound, as of something bumping alongside. Then the door of the stateroom opened, and Prince Ho Tung, looking as if he had slept comfortably and breakfasted satisfactorily, emerged.

"Prince Ho Tung—" Sally began, in a clear, determined young voice.

"You will follow me," his imperial highness said curtly. He added, as if in afterthought: "With your bag."

"But—" she began indignantly.

He brushed past her and ascended the ladder. From somewhere the wizened old Chinese materialized with the prince's two

suitcases. Sally was determined to be placed in a position at least superior to that of a servant. She squeezed in behind Prince Ho Tung, and followed him up the ladder, into the pilot house, and out on the deck.

Her heart sank as she looked. China, *China* everywhere! Here was not the China of Shanghai, an imposing and comforting assemblage of American and European buildings, but the red tile roofs, the dingy walls of the interior. Past her on the muddy river floated the commerce of a nation; junks, large and small, and sampans of varying description.

The Luchow had been made fast to a stone wall. Beyond the wall was the mud of a large compound surrounded by a high brick wall.

The compound, it appeared to her, was densely packed with soldiers in shabby white uniforms, and the river wall was crowded with people. Shouts and cries made a meaningless babble upon the rain-soaked air.

The odor of close-packed yellow humanity came to Sally's sensitive nostrils, and her heart sank deeper still. In all that howling, cheering, babbling mass, there was not a white face!

They were cheering, she supposed, for his imperial highness. She tried to follow him across the soft mud of the compound, but this instantly became physically impossible.

He was surrounded by a thickening ring of yellow faces above bodies in faded blue garments. How soon she would tire of the monotonous, unvarying blue with which Chinese garments were dyed!

A fat woman, with a moon face above innumerable chins, forced her way through soldiers and civilians to Sally's side, and spoke to her harshly in the river tongue.

Sally offered her her bag, supposing the woman had been assigned to her as a servant. This gesture brought upon her a fury of words. The American girl did not understand their meaning, but their intent was plain.

This fat, jelly-ball of a woman was not here to obey her, but to command her! It was made plain to Sally that she was to follow the woman. Despairing of having a word now with Prince Ho Tung, she followed.

The woman led the way into a large, rambling brick structure which, presum-

ably, was a caravansary, or an old government building, or perhaps even a castle. It had a red tile roof, and the eaves turned upward, after the quaint manner of Chinese architecture.

Sally, as she resentfully followed her guide, absently wondered why Chinese eaves took that characteristic upward turn, but she never found out. Her interest in all things Chinese was destined to be exceedingly short-lived.

They went into an arched doorway and across a floor of moist stone. The place exhaled a moldy chill. Through a long, low room, barren of any furniture, save three small teak stands, they turned off and ascended a flight of stone stairs badly in need of a scrubbing.

A chattering sound presently reached Sally's ears. It resembled, in a way, the clamor of quarreling crows, and it gained in volume as she followed her waddling guide down a long hall to a rather handsome door of black wood. The fat woman unlocked the door with a heavy key.

The shrill babble reached its crescendo when the guide pushed the door open, and Sally looked into a great, badly lighted room, which appeared to be full of Chinese. Her escort locked the door after her and concealed the key mysteriously in her garments.

Sally, frightened, pale, extremely nervous, took the occupants of the room to be men and women. She had not seen enough Chinese to distinguish them by their garments, or rather by the contrariness of their garments, for these Chinese women wore pants and the Chinese men wore skirts.

She saw, presently, that all the room's occupants were women, and that they were crowded about the four windows, all quarreling for a look down into the compound. Only at one of these windows was there room for another observer.

At this window one woman stood alone. She was, Sally guessed, young. She was slim, and beautifully dressed in heavy red brocade, richly embroidered with gold and silver and decorated with imitation rubies and sapphires. Her face was sallow, heavy, but her complexion was clear.

Sally took up a position beside her and looked down. The window gave upon the courtyard below, and it was evident that all these women were staring at and babbling about Prince Ho Tung.



The Chinese girl drew away with an air that Sally thought, indifferently, was one of haughtiness. Then, suddenly, the American girl was surrounded by gesticulating, angry, chattering women.

She gathered that they were telling her to go away from this window. But none of them touched her; it was as if they scorned to touch her.

The American girl, nerves strained to the cracking point, lost her temper.

"What the devil is the matter with you?" she cried.

One of the number, it appeared, spoke English after a fashion.

"She prince's numbah one girlee. You keep away. Savvy?"

"Who in Sam Hill," Sally demanded, "are the rest of you?"

The English-speaking woman shrank away from Sally's outflung hand.

"That big lady prince's numbah one wife."

"Well, who are you?"

"I his numbah three wife."

"Oh!" Sally moaned, her heart sinking still deeper. "Are these women all his wives?"

"Maskee! Some wives, some girlies, some amahs."

"Amahs? Servants?"

"Can do! Hai! Can do!"

"Well, who am I in this picture?"

"You?" the woman fairly screamed. "You dirty 'Melican gal. You keep away. Savvy?"

"You bet I'll keep away, and I'll thank you to keep away from me. Savvy?"

"You savvy me; me savvy you," the other yelped. "You stay all 'lone. Maskee bhobbery, savvy? You stay all 'lone."

"I'd like to slap your ugly face," Sally muttered, "for calling me a dirty American girl. If I look dirty, it's because your much worshiped prince made me sleep in a dirty passageway while he took the only stateroom on board the Luchow."

But the woman had slunk back to the mob at one of the windows, and Sally was left to herself. She believed that she was going to be left more than ever to herself, now that an understanding was established.

With nothing better to do, she looked idly about the room. It appeared to be furnished with nothing but low teak stands and piles of rugs. The women, she supposed, slept here, lived here.

She walked to the other end of the room,

where she saw a door. Beyond, in a smaller room, she saw cooking utensils. She said to herself:

"Ye gods, this is nothing but a harem! I—a prisoner in a Chinese harem!"

Did Chinese have harems? She didn't know. She hadn't given a thought before to the idea of the Chinese having more than one wife. Yes; somewhere she had heard they had wives and wives—and wives. Orientals! All Orientals had wives and concubines—"girlies"—and slaves. And just what was her status?

It gave Sally the ghost of a thrill to ask herself that question. A prisoner in the harem of a Chinese prince! What was to become of her? She flushed hotly at a possible solution.

On the floor, in the next room, with other implements, she saw a knife. It looked sharp.

She sauntered in; picked it up; felt its edge. It *was* sharp. She concealed it inside her coat and returned to the larger room.

Beside a teak stand she paused. The stand looked substantial. Sally sat down on it with a tired sigh.

Her headache was worse. She felt cold to the tips of her fingers. Well, what was going to happen next—and when?

It took place instantly. She was immediately surrounded by a pack of screaming women. Sally arose, trembling.

One of the women picked up the stand and threw it, crashing, splintering, against the wall. It fell to the floor in broken fragments.

So that was what they thought of her! She looked at them and laughed. They weren't going to high-hat her!

Turning her back on them, she walked away. Again she walked to the window at which stood the solitary girl.

Again she was surrounded by clamoring women. The English-speaking woman supplied her with an explanation.

"You go 'way—you dirty 'Melican gal! You stay 'way from her. Savvy?"

Sally left the damned spot. So that was it! They—these ignorant, ugly, unclean women—had nothing but contempt for her!

Sally Banning was one of America's socially elect, daughter of one of America's most powerful men. They scorned her!

It was beginning to dawn on Sally that, in spite of her cleverness, her capacity for

deep thinking to which Prince Ho Tung had so frequently alluded, she was really not fitted for the rôle of a Jeanne d'Arc of China. The dream of herself as a power in the Peking palace faded to dimness, then vanished entirely.

She was frightened by the strangeness; by the open hostility and scorn of these women; yet fear did not become a mastering emotion until a little later. Aloof, she sat with her back to the wall, waiting—waiting for she knew not what.

A fuzzy dog, a chow, with hair the color of burned orange, ventured close to her. It was the first friendliness vouchsafed to the girl since she had left the Vandalia. She reached out a tentative hand and patted the dog's head.

The furry little animal thawed slightly. He came closer, sniffing at her strange white hand. Sally scratched his ears. He came closer, then, to have his back scratched.

From amid the babbling women, one lean and very ugly one seemed to be suddenly projected. She stood before Sally and denounced her. Then she dashed to the fat woman, the one who had guided Sally to this dreadful room. The fat woman vanished, but returned in a few minutes with a tall, sour-visaged Mongolian, who had a straggling black walrus mustache.

He strode to Sally and seized the dog by the long hair at the back of its neck. Then he stalked out of the room, the dog whining.

And now the women crowded again to the windows. Sally, curious, imitated them.

She looked down into the rain-swept courtyard and saw the man with the wriggling dog in one hand. In his other hand he held a long knife.

Sally drew in her breath with a sharp gasp as the dreadful meaning of the pantomime struck into her. She averted her head with a little moan as the Mongolian lifted in one hand the squirming dog, and, in the other, the lethal knife.

She turned away, sick, almost fainting. Her nerve had deserted her. She whimpered as she stumbled back to the wall.

She was whipped. She had been tricked. She had been a little fool—dreaming of herself as a Jeanne d'Arc of China.

Against the wall she wept. China was an awful country, a detestable land! All she wanted in the world was to get back to

the Vandalia, to her father—and to John Murray.

If John Murray were only here now! How comforting, how comfortable, how wonderful he was! He was a tower of strength. Yes, he was! John Murray was a tower of strength!

#### XIV

In a large room which gave upon the compound, John Murray squatted on his haunches, the key figure in a circle about a charcoal brazier, the man, perhaps, of a historic moment.

If he should unite these two factions, it might readily be said that he was one of the greatest figures in modern history—the man who had pushed over the topheavy Chinese republic and reinstated a Manchu upon the Peking throne.

The rest of the circle consisted of Chinese, four from the north, four from the south—and Prince Ho Tung. They drank tea and smoked their pipes.

Their inscrutable little eyes shifted from the face of the American to that of the old man who might become the next emperor of China. And between sips and puffs they thrust their hands into the sleeves of their robes.

Glowering, in a corner, stood Bub O'Day, one hand resting as if for comfort, on his right hip pocket, the other nervously playing with a large black cigar. He knew that trouble was brewing.

He knew it the instant these two groups of old mandarins had come together and started their meaningless palaver; knew it the instant he saw the round yellow face of the Cantonese mandarin when its tiny black eyes first encountered the long, solemn face of Ho Tung; knew it the instant John Murray and his imperial highness touched hands.

Something told Bub that trouble might start in this impressively polite group at any moment. He knew his China. He knew that for centuries efforts had been made to unite north and south. He sensed, also, that John Murray was rapidly losing his patience.

The ceremony, to begin with, was much too short. When Chinese meet to settle business or political matters, they will talk suavely for hours while they sip their tea and smoke their little metal pipes. They exchange flowery compliments, empty flattery, couched in the most poetic terms.

In this epochal meeting the ceremonious give and take of sweet nothings should have consumed the entire day. Instead, it had been abandoned at the end of an hour.

Bub, gnawing at his cigar, looking on with the wisdom of an old owl, sent an occasional glance at the door and others at each of the four windows. Presently he saw a tall, gloomy Mongolian stride past the door with a chow dog in one hand and a long knife in the other.

He knew that the dog was on its way to lose its head. O'Day wondered why. Where had the dog come from, and why was it going to have its head lopped off?

His thoughts leaped to Sally Banning, concealed somewhere in this clammy building. They went in a complete, searching circle, and returned, fruitless, to the conference.

Ranged in an awkward but sinister row behind the southern mandarins were Cantonese soldiers in red uniforms. They were standing with bayoneted rifles in readiness.

Their very presence cast a hostile shadow over the conference. They were there to protect the plump and portly gentlemen from the south.

In a room across the hall were soldiers of the northern army, who might or might not triumphantly escort Ho Tung to Peking.

John Murray, squatting on his haunches, drank ceremonial tea and talked southern Chinese in low tones, which he translated in slow, soft English. The southern mandarins understood neither northern Chinese nor English, the northern mandarins understood English, but not southern Chinese.

"Hai Fang wishes to compliment your imperial highness upon the appearance of your troops."

Bub O'Day recalled with gratification that he had made sure his pistol was properly loaded. He wondered if that guy in the gray suit had got off the train and trailed them, or was his imagination only working overtime?

"I'll slip a forty-five between the sap's eyes!" Bub said to himself.

John Murray was slowly gesticulating, tapping the palm of one hand with the forefinger of the other. It was a difficult assignment he had accepted, trying in the face of a difference in tongues and a tremendous background of misunderstanding and hate, extending back beyond the times

of Kublai Khan, to bring these factions together.

He was working in the face of a rising hostility. Something was going wrong. Hai Fang, who had been his staunchest friend on that pilgrimage of two years ago, was preparing to bolt, or else he was planning to place an exorbitant price on his allegiance.

The vital question of whether Ho Tung was the man to lead China's newest revolution and to ascend the throne at Peking was being reached. It could not be avoided, and it was being reached prematurely.

Long ago John had detected what Bub had sensed. The matter was being rushed. The ceremonies were too soon dispensed with.

Things were virtually out of hand. If Hai Fang was not bolting, he was at least rising to dominate the conference.

It was he who, after staring again long and earnestly at the impassive face of Ho Tung, smoothly spoke to John Murray of dynamite. In Cantonese he asked:

"How long have you known this gentleman?"

"A matter of four years, your excellency."

"We wish to examine his credentials," Hai Fang said unexpectedly.

It was not an insult, but it bordered on one. John Murray saw trouble arriving on fleet wings. He would get his own affairs in order before the explosion came.

"What does he say?" Ho Tung's cautious voice asked.

"I do not know what is wrong, your highness," Murray answered, "but things are not as they should be. And before we proceed further, I must insist that Miss Banning be brought to this room."

"Afterward," Ho Tung said, impatiently. "She is safe and comfortable."

"Your assurances, I regret, are insufficient. I will do nothing more with these gentlemen until I see her."

Ho Tung clapped his hands. A servant sprang toward him, and John saw that soldiers were gathering about the door. Evidently the rumor had reached the room beyond that affairs in the conference room were not proceeding smoothly.

His imperial highness murmured to the servant, who bowed thrice and withdrew.

Bub looked on with glowing blue eyes. Drinking in every word that was understandable to him, his admiration for John

Murray was so swollen that it threatened to burst. Sometime he would demonstrate it—somehow.

That squatting man with the grave, rather tired face was not John Murray, the pleasant young passenger from the Vandalia, but a reckless, dangerous adventurer who had, two years before, been greeted throughout southern China as the greatest foreigner since Marco Polo! And from him Bub looked at the impassive face of the old man who might, if this conference bore fruit, ascend the throne of China.

He was enjoying the tenseness of this situation, but he wished that the impending trouble would come to a head. He would, he supposed, die fighting.

That room beyond, he knew, was crowded with northern bayonets, just as the compound was crowded with southern ones. Rifles were ready to go off at the fall of a handkerchief.

Bub wondered how many of those present were going to get out of this mess alive. Well, John Murray would know the way. He had been caught in tighter corners than this one.

"Miss Banning will be down immediately," Ho Tung said calmly.

"Very well, your highness. We will proceed. Hai Fang wishes to have proof of your Manchu ancestry."

O'Day felt a thrill go darting up his spine at that. Now the insults would be flying thick and fast!

But there was no action yet. Prince Ho Tung was tendering to the gentlemen from the south a parchment scroll. As it was unrolled, Bub saw columns and columns of ideographs in black and green and red.

Here was the pedigree of a Manchu, tracing Ho Tung's ancestry back beyond the time of the Manchu invasion! It was a document worthy of perusal.

Heads bent, the southern mandarins gravely scrutinized it. They murmured among themselves as they pointed here and there with their extremely long nails.

"It is understood, your highness," John Murray suddenly said in a loud clear voice, "that I am to leave for Shanghai immediately at the termination of this conference—with Miss Banning."

Prince Ho Tung did not answer. Hai Fang was rising to his feet with the parchment in one hand, a faint, ironical smile at his lips. He looked at Murray.

"My friend, this man is no Manchu,"

the southern mandarin declared. "You have been grossly deceived by an impertinent impostor, a cheap but clever actor, a greedy old scoundrel. His father was a Cantonese rope maker. I have been trying to place him since you brought us together. His name is Chong."

"One moment," John Murray said in Cantonese.

His next words might readily precipitate a wholesale slaughter. He saw bayonets flickering in the doorway, and noted the sergeant of the southern soldiers behind the mandarins glance alertly at his men.

A girl cried shrilly in English:

"Let me in!"

He saw Sally Banning trying to wedge her way through the soldiers who swarmed about the doorway, and out of the tail of his eye he observed Bub O'Day sliding his automatic pistol from his pocket.

The circle about the brazier was rising.

"What does he say?" Ho Tung demanded.

"Bub," John Murray snapped out, "stand by Miss Banning!"

"What does Hai Fang say?" Ho Tung repeated.

"He wishes time for further deliberation," John parried.

"That is a lie, Mr. Murray!"

Sally broke through the pack of soldiers. Behind her, hatless, perspiring, panting for breath, came the man in gray, the offensive stranger whom Bub O'Day had temporarily put off their trail the preceding night in the Shanghai godown compound.

Bub yanked the automatic from his pocket and released the safety catch. He was so pale that every one of his hundreds of freckles resembled an ink spot.

John saw Sally's face in the moment before Bub reached her side. She was looking frantically about, her eyes blurred with terror, but when she saw Bub her vision seemed to clear. He heard her cry:

"Bub! Where's John? Oh, you've come at last!"

Murray said then:

"Ho Tung, it's all over. Hai Fang knew you before I did. He says you aren't a prince, but a piker. He says he smelled you out long ago. He has had his men tracking you a good long time, wondering what you were up to. What you want, he says, isn't the Peking throne, but a free hand for just long enough to sack a few cities and salt down a snug fortune. And



Ho Tung—or Chong—if you weren't an old man, I'm afraid I'd lose my temper and give you what you deserve for dragging me all the way out here to China on a false alarm—and for kidnaping that girl!"

Sally finally reached his side. She seized his arm.

She was furiously angry. Humiliated and mistreated and abused, she thirsted for a reprisal.

"John," she panted, "I want you to punish this vile old man for the cruel, inhuman things he did to me! He told me he was going to make me the Joan of Arc of China—and he made me spend the night in a cold, wet corridor on that motor boat while he took the only stateroom aboard. I don't care if he is a prince—"

"He isn't a prince," John stopped her.

Ho Tung—or Chong—in turn interrupted.

"Mr. Murray," he said quickly, "I can offer you no reward, because I am broken—crushed—but if you will somehow save my life you will earn an old man's everlasting gratitude. If you do not save me, I will be taken before a firing squad before an hour is gone. The Luchow is moored at the end of the compound. She is fueled. The captain and the engine room crew are waiting. I had planned against this very contingency, but how am I to reach the Luchow?"

"Break that window!" John shouted abruptly.

It was as if he had given the order to start a riot. Sally Banning was immediately in the midst of an adventure which would quench her thirst for that treacherous commodity to the very end of her days.

A rifle was discharged so close to her that the spurt of flame singed her cheek. She went white with sickness as she saw a soldier, who had crowded close to her, slip down to the stone floor with a round black spot between his eyes.

Then other rifles began to blaze away, and Sally, clinging for dear life to John Murray's arm, found herself being swept along toward a window.

"Break that window!" John yelled again.

Bub O'Day and a pale-faced young man in gray, a stranger whom she had never seen before, carried out the order with their boots. They kicked out the panes, then they kicked out the sash.

Behind her she heard the clash of bayo-

nets. The room seemed to burst with the ripping crash of rifle shots, and the strong, hot smell of exploded ammunition filled her nostrils.

"John," she pleaded, "will you forgive me for dragging you into this?"

"Out of the window!" John ordered curtly.

He gave her a forceful push that sent her into the compound.

Bub, looking very ferocious, with his lips bared from his teeth, his eyes dark with impending murder for any one who stood in his way, and with the large automatic pistol clutched in his hand, reluctantly prepared to follow the girl into the open air.

So far O'Day hadn't had an opportunity to use the pistol. None of the soldiers had fired upon him or his friends; they were too busy firing upon one another.

Some one gave him a vigorous kick from the rear. He wheeled about indignantly, prepared to fire.

"Who the hell did that?" he snarled.

"I did," growled the young man in gray. "It's what you get for socking me in the jaw the way you did last night. Say! Step on it, will you? There's a lot of bullets flying around this room."

The two young men jumped out of the window together. Ho Tung—or Chong—followed, and John Murray brought up the rear.

They found Sally cowering against the wall between two windows, and confronted by a long line of soldiers in the red of the Cantonese. It appeared that their escape was cut off entirely.

Bayonets flashed. A slim young officer, with a naked saber in his hand, gave some order. The two hundred soldiers promptly presented arms; then, at another order, they brought their rifles to bear upon the five refugees.

Bub raised the automatic pistol. He would go down, fighting gloriously; but before he could pull the trigger, John Murray had struck his arm up.

"Do you want us all to be shot?" he barked.

"But, good night, chief, they're gonna shoot us anyway! How're we gonna get through that flock of bayonets to the dock?"

The soldiers were waiting for the slim young officer to give the word. The muzzles of two hundred rifles stared at the five fugitives.

"Somebody," said Bub, "had better begin talkin', and talkin' fast!"

"What are we going to do, John?" Sally wailed.

"Who," John demanded, "has got some money?"

"You can't bribe them at this stage," sputtered the strange young man in gray. "I've got my pockets full of silver dollars—Mex—but what good—"

"Hand them over! Every dollar! Quick!"

In another moment he was pouring silver dollars into Murray's outstretched hands. A murmur of interest rippled down the line of Cantonese soldiers.

To that tatterdemalion army, a silver dollar was a month's pay. It was food, tobacco, and opium.

John heard the young officer's command, which meant "Prepare to fire," at the same instant that he threw the first handful of dollars Mex. The command went unheeded.

He threw one handful of dollars at one end of the line, and the other handful at the other end. A pocketful of silver change of his own he hurled at the middle of the line.

There was a great clattering as bayoneted rifles were cast to the flagging of the compound. Soldiers on hands and knees were clawing wildly at rolling dollars. Another handful of clanking silver went into the tossing maelstrom of arms and legs.

The officer, saber in one hand, pistol in the other, looked indignant and confused. A silver dollar rolled near the tips of his muddy, tattered shoes. He slid the saber dexterously into its scabbard and stooped down to recover the coin.

In orderly haste the five fugitives filed past the quarreling, wrestling soldiery to the landing where the Luchow waited.

Behind them rifles began to crack. The dollar harvesters were being fired on by the soldiers of the north.

A head appeared in the pilot house window. It was that of the wizened old Chinese, and it was promptly covered by the pistol in Bub O'Day's hand.

The stranger in gray was casting off the rope that held the Luchow to the wall. The craft at once drifted off into midstream. Her three engines presently gave off that sound resembling "*Whoof!*" And the Chinese helmsman, with a revolver at his ear, put the wheel hard over.

With Bub holding a gun on the engine room crew, with the stranger in gray giving similar attention to the helmsman, and Ho Tung—or Chong—mourning the loss of a throne, Sally did that which young ladies have done in similar circumstances since time immemorial. She fainted comfortably and with a contented sigh in John Murray's arms.

At the doorway of the engine room, where Bub was standing menacing the crew, John paused.

"A word to the wise is superfluous, Bub."

"Yeah?" said the gunman. "How come?"

Murray looked down into the face of the unconscious girl and back again to O'Day.

"Only four persons in the world know that I have been in China before. You make the fourth."

"Gee, chief, your secret is safe with me, if that's what you're drivin' at. You mean you don't want her to know?"

"Never," John declared.

He entered the little stateroom. The man who might have been emperor was seated on the edge of the bunk.

"Well," Mr. Chong said, "I'm sorry our scheme had to fall through, but, as you Americans so aptly say, I should worry. I will leave China with my comfortable fortune intact. It was good of you, Mr. Murray, to take me under your wing until we got aboard. Now, if you'll excuse me, I should like to rest."

"You mean," John remarked quietly, "you're asking me to get out of this stateroom?"

"As a matter of fact," Mr. Chong replied, "this boat is my personal property."

"Get off that bunk at once," Murray commanded.

And when Mr. Chong had reluctantly obeyed, he tenderly placed Sally upon it.

"Now, clear out of here!" the American added.

Mr. Chong drew himself up proudly.

"I beg your pardon—" he began.

"Now, look here," Murray said sternly, "I am going to try to hold my temper if it is humanly possible, yet I am, after all, not a saint. You have lied to me at great length; you brought me to China under false pretenses, and you have subjected me to the danger of losing my life. I won't be resentful about any of those things, Chong, but I am boiling mad at your treat-

ment of Miss Banning. Until we reach Shanghai, you are to consider yourself her personal servant."

"What?" Mr. Chong gasped.

"The wireless operator," John went on, "who is now in charge of your engine room, came all the way to Nanking with me because he thought he would be given an honest chance to shoot what he calls a Chink. I am going to call him in here if you don't get out!"

Mr. Chong started for the door with alacrity.

"Wait a moment!" Murray stopped him, and quickly slipped the muddy oxfords from Sally's feet. "Clean these thoroughly, Chong!" he ordered.

## XV

WHEN Sally Banning recovered consciousness, she was lying upon the bunk, and John Murray was bending solicitously over her.

It occurred to her that American men were inestimably nicer than Chinese men. They didn't, for example, make frightened American girls sleep in cold, damp passages while they selfishly occupied the only stateroom on board.

She next made the discovery that her hand was inclosed in John's, that his fingers were warm, and that they were pressing hers firmly.

Sally's smile became quite complacent.

"Well?" John remarked brusquely.

But he wasn't addressing Sally. The strange young man in gray had entered the little stateroom and was looking at Murray resentfully.

"Say, listen," he began plaintively. "If you hadn't just got through saving my skin, I'd be good and sore, Mr. Murray. I went down to the Vandalia last night at the special request of the Shanghai Board of Trade to bring you up to their banquet as their guest of honor. They wanted you to give a talk on publicity, and I thought you'd be tickled to death."

"You didn't follow me all the way to Nanking to deliver that invitation!" Murray insinuated.

The young man in gray looked uneasy. He fumblingly withdrew from his inner pocket a folded sheet of paper.

"I followed you all the way to Nanking, Mr. Murray, because the president of the Paramount Plumbing Products Corporation cabled me not to let you out of my sight

until I got your name on this paper. He wants you to reconsider your resignation and to sign this new contract, which I drew up on one of our forms."

"I'm afraid," John said, "that I won't be able to sign that contract. I've virtually told the president of the Southern and Pacific Central Railroad that I'll take charge of his publicity department."

"If you don't sign this contract," the young man in gray explained disconsolately, "I'm going to lose my job. And if you do sign it, I get a raise."

"It seems to place you in a somewhat delicate position," John commented.

"And if I don't get the raise and keep my job," went on the stranger, "I will have to give up all hope of marrying a girl who has picked me out from among forty-seven suitors."

Sally, who had been listening silently, now spoke.

"It seems to me," she said, "that you might let me make the decision for you, John. After all, dad has run his railroad for years and years without you, and we might say, mightn't we, that the very skeleton of the nation is made of brass and lead pipe? I think your greater duty is toward the plumbing industry, John."

"You are romantic, Sally," was John's answer to that. "You are not thinking of railroads or plumbing. You know very well you detest plumbing. But"—he turned to the tensely waiting young man—"I will sign the contract. Now, don't you think you really ought to keep an eye on the man at the wheel?"

"I think perhaps I had," the young man agreed.

And when he had gone, John said to Sally:

"I suppose you are going to keep on looking for romance and adventure."

The girl's eyes twinkled up at him.

"How can you say that when all I really want in the world is the adventure of living a calm, normal, useful life, helping the man I love to become the greatest publicity expert in captivity?"

"H-m," John murmured. "You've changed."

"I'm cured, dear," she corrected him.

Her eyes were starry, and her air was that of a girl reasonably sure that she was soon to be kissed by the right man.

"You love me a lot, don't you, John?"

"I adore you, Sally!"

"And yet," she said reproachfully, "you've never talked to me once—not once—about your work."

"You never gave me the chance," was his answer. "You know very well you de-test plumbing and publicity."

"That was in the long ago," Sally informed him calmly. "Tell me now, what is the very best kind of plumbing?"

"Do you really want to know?" John asked with a delighted smile.

"I'd love to know," Sally replied stoutly.

THE END

"Well," he began enthusiastically, "you see, it's like this—"

Sally listened, but all she heard was the beat of his rich, deep, beloved voice above the throb of the Luchow's engines.

He might be John Murray, publicity expert and plumbing authority, a solid, substantial business man, to the rest of the world, but to her he would always be a gallant, debonair adventurer.

He had risked his life to save her from the horrors of a Chinese harem!

## By Aid of the Donkey

TELLING OF A DAY WHEN THE BEST-LAID PLANS OF THE BIG FOUR OF TICKFALL RESULTED IN SHOCKING DISASTER

By E. K. Means

A SCARED negro sat at a table, facing the Big Four of Tickfall, and the quartet surveyed him with expressions of mingled pity and contempt.

"It's jes' a plain case of hoss stealin'," Vinegar Atts asserted, as he glared at the cringing colored man with righteous indignation. "You been wuckin' wid hosses ever since you wus a little nigger jockey. You knows all de tricks, an' now, in yo' foolish middle age, you pulls off a crime like dis!"

"Naw, suh, it don't look exackly like pure stealin' to me," Pap Curtain dissented. "You see, ef a feller takes somepin dat don't belong to him, an' he really don't want it, but takes it fer another puppus, an' intends finally to gib it back—ef he don't git kotch wid it befo' he kin git it back—"

"Aw, stop dat dope dream!" Skeeter Butts interrupted. "De pen'tenchry is full of coons dat argifies jes' like dat. Dey believes dat de jury wus prejudiced agin 'em. 'Tain't safe to kid yo'se'f an' den try to cornvince a jury dat you's a real good sweet Candy Kid. It cain't be did—not by no nigger."

"Empty is shore up a tree," Figger

Bush declared. "A nigger is fawty diffunt kinds of a fool dat will steal anything whut kin make a noise an' git him kotch."

"An' dis here empty-headed Empty Cann stole a jackass!" Skeeter Butts laughed.

Empty grinned in a sickly way, and looked appealingly from one to the other of the colored sages. He tried to ignite the end of a stogy with a match, but his hands trembled uncontrollably. Tossing stogy and match to the floor, he reached to his hip pocket, whence he extracted a large twist of chewing tobacco.

"Now dat you niggers is done relieved yo' minds, I invites you to hear whut I'm got to say," Empty began.

"You don't hab to testify agin yo'se'f," Pap Curtain snarled. "De law will per-teck you."

"I knows it," Empty told him.

"Anything you say will shore be used agin you," Figger Bush snapped. "I got my tail kotch in a cuttin' box once when I spoke too free."

"Whenever a nigger speaks, he over-speaks hisself," Vinegar Atts proclaimed; "but of co'se a Empty Cann is got to rat-tle ef it's got anything in it!"



"It's dis way," Empty began again. "You-alls knows de widder whut calls herself Sally Smile. She jes' moved in dese here parts—been livin' down in de lower part of de country. Now her husbunt got bit by a snake an' died, an' he didn't leave her nothin' but a little life insuriance, one gal daughter, an' dis here donkey burro. She fotch de burro up to Tickfall, de gal daughter follered along, an' here all three of 'em is."

"Shove along, Empty!" Vinegar said impatiently. "We knows all dat. Git up to whar you cormitted dis crime an' mus' cornfess it an' repent an' refawm."

"I'm gittin' ready to move somewhar," Empty said apologetically. "Gimme time to pick up de subject! Well, suh, Sally Smile is fond of dis here donkey—"

"De widder says dat jackace reminds her of her dear deceased husbunt," Figger Bush interrupted. "It wus de only remainder dat de remains left her as a reminder."

"De remains lef' somepin else dat reminds me dat I ain't a married man an' had oughter be," Empty grinned. "I's alludin' to de gal daughter. She's got dat durned ole donkey skinned a mile fer looks an' eve'ything else."

"Git along! Don't stop to sing us no love song. Cornfess yo' crime," Skeeter Butts snapped. "Whut about de jack an' de queen?"

"I axed Connie Smile to marry me, an' she said she wus willin', but she knowed her maw would object. Of co'se, I don't want to hab no maw-in-law whut's down on me. I believes in peace an' ca'm in de fambly—"

"So you stole yo' maw-in-law's jack!" Skeeter howled.

"Yep," Empty told him. "Me an' Connie knowed how fond de widder wus of dat donkey; so we doped it out dat ef he got losted, an' de widder had to hunt fer him four five days an' got oneasy, an' I jes' happenstanced to find de burro, dat she would be so glad an' gratified an' grateful an' satisfied because de donkey wus back in de fambly, mebbe she would be willin' to take me in de happy home circle wid 'em."

"Dat warn't a bad notion," Skeeter Butts applauded. "How did you come out?"

"I ain't come out yit," Empty grinned. "You see, I'm jes' tryin' to git out."

"Is you stole de jack yit?" Skeeter asked.

"You knows I is," Empty said.

"Whut you done wid him?" Skeeter demanded.

"I sot up wid him all las' night," Empty said. "Dar wus a good reason. I had him hid out on my little place, but I wus skeart to leave him alone. Ef somebody come out dar lookin' fer him, I wanted to be whar I could chase him off in de swamp."

"Dat wus right," Vinegar commended. "Of co'se, de fellers is soupspicious of you. De widder sont fer us dis mawnin' an' tole us her troubles, an' we sont fer you right off. We knowed you stole de animal."

"You didn't tell her, did you?" Empty asked uneasily.

"Naw—we didn't know fer a fack at dat time," Vinegar told him; "but as soon as we seed yo' guilty face, we knowed whut you done."

"Now, brudders, I wants you to he'p me," Empty said. "You knows I ain't stealin' no donkey—I wouldn't hab one; but dis here is a trick to he'p me along wid my little love bizness. You-all kin do me a large amount of good ef you will keep dat jackace fer me three four days."

"Do *which*?" Vinegar Atts bawled.

"Keep him fer me," Empty pleaded. "You four cullud men is de best reputated men in town, so eve'ybody say. Nobody won't never look fer a stray burro around whar you is, an' he'll be kep' safe until I needs him."

The four men meditated upon this. Empty was a good sort, and they liked him. If he wanted to get married, he should be permitted to do so. If he wanted to make a hit with his future mother-in-law by a little trick, that was also permissible. Their conversation with the Widow Smile that morning had convinced them that she valued the burro for sentimental reasons, and would feel under great obligation to any one who found him. She was afraid that her pet had grown lonesome and homesick, and had "left out" for the place of his former residence. She hated to go clear back to her old home in order to get him.

"I believes in helpin' mattermony along, niggers," Skeeter Butts said. "We's gwine out to de Gaitskill hog camp to-night. Le's drive dat donkey out to de camp an' let him stay fer a few days."

"All right, Empty," Vinegar announced. "We'll drap by yo' place some time to-day an' pick him up."

## II

FOUR men followed a donkey's tail out toward the Gaitskill hog camp that same evening, about sundown. Slow, stupid, obstinate, long-eared, and mangy, the melancholy animal had filled the men with disgust long before they arrived at the cabin where old Isaiah Gaitskill lived.

"I pities any nigger widder woman whose husbunt ain't left her nothin' to remind her of him excusin' a thing like dis," Skeeter Butts snapped, as he laid the flat side of a fence picket along the beast's ribs with a loud *spat*.

"A mussiful man is mussiful to his beast," Vinegar Atts, the preacher, quoted, picking up a clod of dirt as large as a football and heaving it at the burro's head. It fell on the animal's back and broke into fragments, raining down the thick hair to the ground.

"Ef my mattermony life depended upon de favor of a widder woman whut favored a long-yearred donkey, I wouldn't look forward to no great amount of happiness," Figger Bush declared. "One donkey, one daughter, an' one deevo'ce all in one dawgawn day—dat would be my little program!"

"Pull off in de woods, fellers! Here comes somebody!" Vinegar Atts warned, as he ran to the donkey's head and tried to turn him from the main highway.

But the steering gear was defective, or else the donkey seemed to think that he was not popular with the crowd, and that they might be taking him out in the woods to hang him. He decided to stay where he was.

As the animal refused to be led, and declined to be pushed, Vinegar Atts jerked off his long-tailed coat, threw it over the donkey's head, blinded him, and then tried to back him into the jungle; but the reverse gear was jammed, or something, and he would not go backward.

The approaching vehicle was near, so the four men abandoned the beast and betook themselves to the woods. The animal stood in the middle of the road in a deeply meditative mood, as if he had some trouble on his mind—a profound problem requiring immediate solution and necessitating a perfect abstraction of pure thought.

When the wagon, which contained several colored persons, had passed, the men emerged from their hiding places and started again.

"Le's leg along pretty peart, fellers," Vinegar Atts panted, as he wiped the sweat from his face. "Dis here weather feels like rain to me, an' I don't crave to git my preachin' clothes wet."

"Dis here dumb brute travels in low," Skeeter snickered. "I done wore my fence picket out, an' it ain't speeded him up none till yit."

"How come you reckin Gawd made a thing like dis?" Pap Curtain snarled, as he jumped back about five feet. He had been walking directly behind the burro, and the animal had stopped suddenly to think again, causing Pap to collide with the rear end.

"Ef he'd been carryin' a tail light, you'd shore 'a' busted it," Skeeter Butts giggled. "Why don't you watch whar you's gwine at? He give you de stop signal by holdin' out his left year—I seen it myself."

"I resigns dis place in yo' favor," Pap said, jarred by his experience. "De nex' time I bumps him from behin', he might kick me in de face an' spile my beauty complete."

It was almost dark when they emerged from the thick woods into the clearing where stood the log cabin that was their destination. They saw old Isaiah sitting upon a little porch, smoking a pipe and watching the red sun sink in a cloud of inky blackness. When he saw the men, he arose feebly upon his aged limbs and shaded his eyes, the better to see who his visitors were.

"Bless de Lawd!" he quavered. "Shore am glad to see you! Come up on de porch an' set down. Hitch yo' hoss an' rest yo' hats. Whar did you git dat mewel?"

"Tain't no mule, Isaiah," Vinegar told him. "It's a jackace."

"Whut you fotch him here fer?" Isaiah demanded. "I don't crave de sawsiety of no donkey."

"A nigger friend of ourn stole him, an' he axed us to keep him fer awhile," Skeeter Butts explained.

"Ain't you never heard tell whut de cotehouse does to niggers whut receives stolen goods?" Isaiah asked.

The four men gave an audible gasp, but uttered no words. They had not thought of this.

"S'pose de sheriff is out huntin' fer dis jack an' finds him here wid you-alls wid a rope around his neck!" Isaiah suggested.

"We'll tell Marse John dat we found de donkey in de woods, an' wus jes' takin' him home to de owner," Figger Bush replied.

"Shore!" Isaiah said in disgusted tones. "An' you'd find out dat de sheriff had been follerin' de tracks of dat donkey an' four nigger men all de way to dis spot, an' all of you wus gwine away from Tickfall. Marse John is like a Injun. He reads sign."

"Shut up, Isaiah!" Vinegar said uneasily. "I'm a nigger preacher, an' I don't aim to git mixed up in no boss stealin' scandal. It'll disreputize my name in dis town."

Suddenly the glare of the sun was snapped out like a candle extinguished by a puff of wind. The four men glanced up and saw that the black cloud in which the sun had set was racing toward them on the wings of the wind. The great forest whistled and shrieked, bending its vegetation to the increasing gale. Then it wailed like some animate thing in mortal agony, and, as the storm increased, it roared like the ocean, the slashing of the tree limbs resembling the tossing of waves on a rock-bound coast.

"Bless de Lawd!" Vinegar Atts bawled above the shriek of the wind. "De rain will wash out all our tracks, an' de sheriff can't find us!"

At this point a new sound was injected into the general clamor—a weird, mournful wail that seemed to begin afar off and draw nearer and become more pathetic as it approached. Then it died out; but just as it seemed to have ended, it broke out again.

"Come in, niggers!" Figger Bush whooped. "Dat's a new noise in dis swamp. Sounds to me like a cycaloon storm is comin'."

"Dat's de donkey brayin', but it ain't sound nachel in dis storm," Isaiah shouted. "Whut you gwine do wid dat burro? He'll git kilt in de storm!"

The four men started at a trot toward the tree where the donkey was tied. Then the rain descended and caught them all out in the open. Rain in a Louisiana swamp means such a downpour as is scarcely duplicated in this nation, except by Niagara's plunging flood. The men gasped for breath

and bent over, covering their mouths with their hands, finding themselves submerged by the bucketing water. When they were able to breathe a little easier, they untied the donkey; but the obstinate animal, standing with his head between his knees, refused to move. They belabored his sides with their fists and kicked him in the ribs and twisted his tail, but the burro merely grunted and stood his ground.

"Fer gawsh sakes!" Skeeter Butts shrieked. "Why don't somebody do somepin?"

Then Vinegar Atts thought of something to do. He leaned over, took the burro's thick ear in his mouth, and bit it.

The burro gave his head a quick, side-long jerk. Something seemed to snap in the back of Vinegar's neck, and he dropped to the ground in a heap, as if he had been shot.

"Lawdymussy!" Figger Bush howled, beating at the bucketing rain with his fists. "Dat donkey jerked his head, an' Vinegar didn't unbite quick enough. Le's tote him to de house."

The three men picked up the ponderous form of the prostrate preacher, and bore him to the cabin. The donkey, with the proverbial perversity of his kind, followed solemnly behind them, and when they entered the cabin he climbed the steps of the porch and went in, too.

Vinegar's head had wobbled up and down as the men carried him, and this gentle exercise helped him to recover from the shock of his injury. He soon recovered consciousness, but he had a stiff neck for many a week to remind him of his failure to "unbite."

"My gosh!" Vinegar wailed, when he was able to speak and could recall what had happened to him. "De nex' time I wants to bite a mule's year, I'm gwine chop it off an' nail it to a tree!"

"You is de fust man I ever heard of dat bit a jackass," Skeeter Butts laughed. "It takes a nigger to go to eatin' somepin dat nobody else would touch."

"Dese here wet clothes ain't doin' me no good," Figger Bush declared, as he slapped his arms, and the drops of water spurted from the saturated garments. "Whar kin I hang up my clothes to dry out?"

"Dar ain't no place," Isaiah told him. "Dar ain't open space enough fer a clothes line in dis room. We got five bunks around

de wall, an' in de middle of de room we got five niggers an' a donkey."

"How about de kitchen?" Pap Curtain asked.

"We got to cook our vittles in dat room, an' 'tain't nothin' but a little lean-to, no-how. We don't hab room fer wet clothes an' grub an' hongry coons," Isaiah declared.

Hail had fallen somewhere in the swamp, and the air was chill. The rain had ceased, but the clouds still lowered, and the rolling thunder prophesied a night of summer showers. In the rear of the cabin there was a shed built of upright poles, with a metal roof. This was used in the annual hog killing as a place to dress the meat. The five men thought of it about the same time.

"We kin put dis ole burro out under dat shed to-night," Vinegar Atts remarked.

"Shore, an' we kin stretch a line across from dem poles an' dry our clothes while we sleeps," Pap agreed.

Thereupon they led the donkey out of the cabin, tied him at one end of the shed, and proceeded to hang their clothes on a wire which they stretched for that purpose. The rain began again, but the men pranced around in it, whooping like savages, their operations illumined by the dim light of a lantern.

"Dese here wet clothes ain't gwine dry out on a wet night like dis," Vinegar Atts announced. "Dey'll be jes' as damp to-morrer as dey is now."

"Le's build a little fire under our clothes," Skeeter Butts suggested. "Dis shed won't kotch on fire. De roof is made of metal."

They found plenty of dry wood under Isaiah's cabin, where he had placed it for protection from the weather. With the experience of fire builders, they put green wood on top of the dry to make a slow fire. Then they bade the donkey good night and went whooping back to the house.

Taking the covers from the bunks, they wore them Indian fashion, to protect themselves from the chill wind that whistled through the cracks in the log cabin. They prepared their supper in the lean-to, and rolled into bed for the night.

Outside the cabin the storm shrieked and wailed, the thunder rolled almost without cessation, and the fire under the shed threw a red glare upon the rain-drenched under-

growth and turned the clinging drops of moisture into rubies red as blood.

### III

HAVE you ever heard a burro greet the dawn with his morning song?

He has a voice whose variations can only be recorded upon a seismograph chart where scientists describe the vagaries of an earthquake. In volume of sound and carrying power, it can only be compared to a siren whistle, a fog horn, or a calliope, possessing the least attractive qualities of all three.

An interesting feature of the performance is the fact that one never knows when the burro has finished. It may be thought that he has done, that one certain and particular vocal demonstration has been brought to a conclusion, when lo, he mocks one's sense of finality by a crescendo scale of sound bursting forth so unexpectedly that it impresses the hearer with the idea that it must have been something left over from yesterday, or maybe from the day before that.

The negroes have a song which suggests the devotional spirit of the burro at early matins:

"My brother's busted loose an' gone,  
An' now he's a singin' of de mawnin' song;  
Oh, Lawd, how long?"

Furthermore, the burro is able to discern the approach of dawn sooner than the bird which roosts upon the topmost limb of the highest tree. Whether he knows that the morning is coming, or perceives that it has come, or believes that his earnest vocalization will make it come, or merely tonorializes to express his desire that it should come, no fellow can find out; but "oh, Lawd, how long?" It's long before daylight, and it is long in its continuance, and it is long in its patient persistence, and it makes no difference to the burro how long it is. He is always willing to go the extreme length.

It seemed to the five men in the cabin that they had hardly fallen asleep when the burro sounded the rising signal. Then they understood what Empty Cann had meant when he said, "I sot up wid him all las' night." No more slumber, no more sleep, no more folding of the hands to sleep, as far as they were concerned, and they knew it. They might as well get up and go out to the shed, and comfort that donkey and keep him company.



Suddenly Vinegar Atts sprang out of bed with a startled exclamation.

"Say, niggers," he bawled, "set up an think! How does you make a jack stop brayin'?"

"It cain't be did," Pap Curtain snarled. "Of co'se, ef you kill him, mebbe he'll stop brayin' at de close of de day. A snake's tail wiggles till de sun goes down."

"Shut up, and talk sense!" Vinegar Atts howled. "Us is in danger. Dat donkey is stolen goods, an' here he's bawlin' to de whole world whar he's hid at! How kin we stop him?"

"Go out dar an' bite his year, Vinegar," Pap Curtain suggested. "Mebbe dat 'll git his mind off whut ails him."

"One bite on a jack's ear is a plenty fer me," Vinegar sighed, feeling his neck. "Dat one bite nearly jerked my mind out'n my head."

"Le's go out an' feed him," Skeeter Butts proposed. "He cain't bawl wid his mouth full of corn."

So they all went out to the shed, to feed the burro. They did not need the lantern, for the fog of the swamp was now luminous with the first rays of the rising sun.

When they got under the shed, the Big Four of Tickfall received the shock of their lives. This is what had happened:

The four men had hung their wet clothes upon a wire stretched under the tin roof of the shed, and had built a fire under the garments to dry them. They had constructed the fire with dry wood below and wet wood above, hoping to make a slow heat. The clothes had dried out; the dry tinder had dried the wet wood; the flame had leaped up to the garments and ignited them, and what the colored men saw upon the line was the charred remnants of their wearing apparel.

Hanging over the wire were the two arms of the Rev. Vinegar Atts's "Prince Album" coat and the legs of his trousers—nothing more. Skeeter Butts and Figger Bush had lost the legs of their trousers, so that each of them was reduced to a pair of *Lord Fauntleroy* knickers, and even these lacked much of the rear portion. Pap Curtain found a few discolored suspender buttons in the wood ashes, and claimed these as all that remained of his garments.

"We's all burnt out to a shirt tail finish, niggers!" Vinegar wailed. "I never had such bad luck in all my life. I ain't

got nothin' to wear to town but my stove-pipe hat!"

"I ain't got nothin' but two gallus buttons an' a handful of hot ashes," Pap Curtain sighed. "How do a feller wear sack-cloth an' ashes, Revun Atts?"

"De Bible don't say," replied Atts. "I always wondered how dey kept de ashes on."

"Mebbe Isaiah could lend us de loant of some clothes until we kin git back to town," Skeeter Butts suggested.

"I ain't got no clothes, excusin' dese I'm got on, an' dey won't fit nobody but a ole bent-over octogeranium like me," Isaiah told them.

"Dat's so, Isaiah," Vinegar agreed; "so dar ain't nothin' for you to do but git on dis donkey an' ride to town an' fotch us back some clothes."

"An' you better start right now, Isaiah," Pap Curtain urged. "Ef you go soon you won't be late gittin' back, an' us niggers shore needs clothes."

Ten minutes later Isaiah was astride the burro, moving toward town. About ten o'clock that morning he returned, on foot, and with no clothes except those he wore on his own body.

"Whar's de donkey, Isaiah?" Vinegar bawled.

"De widder, Sally Smile, took him away from me," Isaiah explained, as he sat down upon the steps of the porch, his creaky old joints worn to exhaustion by his long walk. "Some niggers in a wagon told her dat dey seen you fo' niggers drivin' dat burro dis way yistiddy afternoon. Dis mawnin' she was listenin' fer his daylight bray, so she could find out whar you hid him."

"Whut did she do?" Skeeter Butts asked uneasily.

"She cussed consid'able, an' blim-blammed some, an' wus powerful bitter-spoken. Den she made me git off, an' she got on an' rid dat animule away," Isaiah told him.

"Why didn't you go on to town an' git us some clothes?" Pap Curtain demanded.

"I ain't follerin' no stolen goods to Tick-fall, whar de cotehouse is at, especially after I git kotch straddle of dem stolen goods," Isaiah informed them.

When night came, the distressed quartet wrapped the draperies of their couches about them and crept back to Tickfall. They waited on the edge of the village until the dead hours of the night, when the

streets would be deserted, then slunk through the shielding darkness to their homes.

## IV

FOUR gloomy men were seated at the table in the Henscratch the next morning. They were too sleepy, too disgusted, to take any interest in the affairs of Tickfall, and had met together merely from force of habit and in a common fellowship of loss and suffering and deprivation and disappointment. No enterprise ever undertaken by the Big Four had been so disastrous to its originators, so full of defeat and discomfiture.

"Good mawnin', brudders! Gawd bless you!" Empty Cann proclaimed, as he pushed open the swinging door and bounced into the room with a face shining with happiness.

"Huh!" Vinegar Atts grunted.

"I come to thank you cullud men fer all de kind help you done me," Empty continued, unmindful of the baleful glare from the eyes of the Big Four.

"Huh!" Pap Curtain grunted.

"I wus skeart you would git all messed up in yo' plans an' git me in bad, but you shore done yo'selfs proud," Empty continued.

"Huh!" Skeeter Butts snorted.

"Yes, suh, ole Widder Smile seen de light, an' she turned over dat gal daughter to me to love an' perreck an' cherish, an' she axed me to live at her house so I could guard her jackace an' take keer of him fer her!"

"Huh!" Figger Bush intoned.

"Whut ails you-alls?" Empty suddenly demanded, staring from one to the other. "Yo' noses is turned up like you smell some kind of fumigate, an' you ain't did nothin' but grunt at me."

"Dey is grunts of supprise," Vinegar Atts told him. "We ain't expeck no thanks fer whut we done."

"Dat's because you don't know all de come-out," Empty said easily. "When de Widder Smile fotch her donkey home, I figgered dat our little plan had done gone bust."

"It busted on us all right," Pap Curtain told him.

"Well, suh, when she went into de house, I pulled two long hairs out'n dat jack's tail, an' tied one hair per each aroun' each of de animule's front foots, right under de fetlock."

"Dat's a ole trick," Skeeter said.

"Shore! I learned dat trick in my jockey days, an' it wucked jes' like it always do—dat donkey went lame in bofe front foots."

"Suttinly!" Figger Bush said.

"Atter he got real good an' lame, I called de Widder Smile out an' showed her. I told her de donkey had been abused by you-alls, an' dat he either wus foundered or he had de blind staggers," Empty continued.

"Dat wus kind of you," Vinegar Atts snapped.

"Shore! I'm always kind to my cullud friends," Empty continued, unabashed. "So, atter dat, I went to wuck on dat donkey, an' doctored him all de rest of de day to keep him from dyin'. Along about dark yistiddy I broke dem little hairs tied aroun' his legs, an' he got well real peart. Ole Widder Smile wus so glad I saved him dat dar warn't nothin' too good fer me."

The four men looked at one another, and a sour grin appeared around each mouth.

"When is you aimin' to git married?"

Vinegar asked.

"I done is," Empty told them. "Las' night!"

### THE ETERNAL GODS

BEWARE the gods, nor think because

We give them other names to-day,

Taught that their thrones are passed away,

The gods are dreams and dreams their laws.

Still hidden in the stars they rule,

Just to a hair, our mortal lot;

And he who says the gods are not

Is still and evermore the fool!

*Richard Le Gallienne*

# An Unguarded Moment

IN THE ETERNAL WAR OF THE SEXES, A BULLYING MAN  
SHOULD BE WARY OF A SUBTLE BLOW FOR  
WHICH THERE IS NO DEFENSE

By Dorothy Brodhead

SHE was alone in the office with Jadwin, and the familiar, dreaded topic was in the air—not being actually spoken about, but none the less poignantly obvious to the girl who hated it.

It was past five o'clock. The clerk in the outer office had gone for the day. Jadwin was signing his letters. And Thais had the envelopes stamped and addressed, and piled on her desk in readiness.

"Where is your father?" he asked without looking up from the papers.

Her father was the Colyer of Colyer & Jadwin, attorneys at law.

"He is in court," she answered smoothly, "but I've no idea what is keeping him so late."

"Will he stop by for you with the car?"

"I expect him to."

She filled in her vacant time by putting on her hat, a smart little sport hat that she pulled down so low over one eye as nearly to hide the rose-tinted curve of that cheek.

Jadwin signed the last sheet, and closed his fountain pen preparatory to putting it in his pocket. He was a huge man, large of frame without possessing much superfluous flesh, but his features were modeled with delicate details of beauty that seemed unpleasantly inappropriate in a man of his size.

His build suggested forty, and his face looked twenty-five. As a matter of fact, he was thirty-four.

"If you're not sure of his stopping for you, why not let me drive you home?" he suggested.

She took up the sheaf of letters and carried them to her own desk, situated beside a window midway between the two exclu-

sive sanctums lettered respectively "Mr. Colyer" and "Mr. Jadwin."

"Thanks just the same, Jad, but I'd rather wait for him."

He got up and trailed her as far as the door of his own office, standing at the threshold to watch her as she folded his letters and sealed them into their envelopes.

"Don't you want to drive with me, Thais?" he demanded thickly.

The familiar, dreaded topic was materializing out of the air. She had not been mistaken when she felt it there all the time.

It was a struggle to keep her voice smooth over the tumult of her feelings.

"I'd rather drive with dad," she said.

"And suppose I choose to come along?"

There was assurance in his tone, and just the hint of a threat. He knew that he was sure of her father's welcome, and that his coming would be distasteful to her.

But she forced down her anger, and answered him with cool cordiality. "Splendid! Will you come—for dinner?" To save her soul, she could not have kept that little note of exclusiveness out of her tone and, unconsciously, she had placed a time limit on her invitation. She knew that he felt the thrust, even before she looked up and saw that his flush was deepening to an angry purple.

"I wonder how much longer you think you're going to treat me like a rank outsider?"

She was sincere in her apology. "I don't mean to do that," she broke in breathlessly.

But he beat down her protest. "You and your father have been very close to

each other always. I understand that. You don't want any one to come between you and him; but surely you aren't enough of an idiot to suppose that your father and your father's profession are going to fill your life forever? You're human and, if I don't miss my guess, you're enough of a woman to desire much profounder things. Besides, you wouldn't have to give up your present interests. As far as that goes, they are my interests, too. I want you, *Thais!*"

He came nearer. "As for your father," he continued, "nothing would please him better than to see you married to me. It would mean happiness for him, too. The three of us together—coming to the office together mornings—going home together at night—"

Going home together! He could not know the picture his words created to her eyes. Being Jadwin's wife! In her father's house!

She finished sealing the last letter and got to her feet hastily.

"No, Jad," she said quietly. "Never."

His anger deepened at her refusal. "Look here, I'm not going to be made a fool of!" he said furiously. "If you are setting out to play against me, I'll show you where the strength lies. From the first minute I came here you've hated me. You took a dislike to me that very first week—"

"When you persuaded my father not to take the Bramley case," she interrupted quietly.

"Oh, is that so? Well, there happened to be no money in the Bramley case, and a darned good chance for a black mark against whoever defended it. You took a dislike to me for giving your father sound advice."

"I began disliking you then," she corrected. "If it hadn't been for your continually urging against it, he'd have undertaken the defense, and we'd have worked on it like Trojans, he and I, and he'd have won the case; and Bramley would have never gone to the chair. The poor fellow wasn't guilty; and his wife would be a happy woman instead of the broken down wreck she is to-day. No money in the case, you say! A black mark—for defending an innocent man! Oh, you don't belong with my father and me. Your code isn't our code. Please don't talk to me about marrying you again!"

She turned away from him toward the window, straining on tiptoe to see the street below, while her eyes searched for the familiar roadster at the curb. It was not there, and, to escape facing Jadwin, she remained facing the window that framed the mellow loveliness of the spring dusk.

From this window she had watched six springtimes come trailing their glories into the city, laying green velvet in a wide square around the old stone courthouse across the way, pouring golden sunshine upon the wide stone sidewalks that framed it, and the narrower cement walks that cut the green from every corner to lead straight to the foot of the four flights of stately stone steps she had come to know so well.

Six springtimes! And five of them had been happy—before Jadwin had come to disturb the contentment of the life that had begun for her when she left college in her sophomore year to come home, and "be with dad because mother had died."

And almost immediately after her homecoming Miss Simms, who had been with the firm—it had been Hibbs & Colyer in those days—so long that she seemed like a fixture, had been stricken with the long illness from which she never recovered, and "Colyer's daughter," coming in to help out, had remained as his permanent confidential secretary.

No one suspected how she had loved the life of those five sweet years. Her thoughts strayed back over them now as she faced the soft breeze that came through the open window.

Jadwin boasted his ability to recognize occasions when silence was golden; he evidently recognized one of them now, for he made no answer to her outburst. Presently he appeared to get the best of his irritation.

Thais heard him locking his desk for the night, and knew that his brief pause on the way to the door was for the purpose of securing his hat from the tree in the outer office.

At the door of the corridor his footsteps paused.

"Good night, *Thais!*"

"Good night, Jad."

After he had gone, she continued at the window until she saw the maroon-colored roadster draw up to the curb. Then she gathered up Jadwin's letters to drop them into the mail chute, and took her swagger-



ing sport coat with its wide fur collar, which she donned on her way to the door.

## II

WHEN she reached the sidewalk she found Jadwin standing beside the roadster in conversation with her father. He had waited to see Colyer—but he had come down to the street to wait. She did not know just what this proceeding implied, but with a surging sense of defiance she did not care.

Her father's eyes strayed past Jadwin's intervening shoulder, and saw her. He instantly smiled a welcome, that quick smile of his under his close-cut gray mustache. And, mechanically, one of his long, veined, freckled hands left the wheel to reach gropingly for the handle of the door to open it while he continued his conversation.

She slid in beside him.

The men terminated their conversation with her arrival. Jadwin stepped back to the middle of the sidewalk, and tipped his hat. Those long hands of her father's began manipulating the controls. Then the car was off through the fragrant, deepening dusk.

"Got tied up in court," Colyer commented by way of explanation. "We waited for the verdict in the Carthmore case."

"Oh, then it is ended!" Her voice quickened to eagerness. "Did they—how did it go?"

"Not guilty."

"Oh, good! Good! But I was sure you'd win that." Her eyes rested happily on the street that stretched before them, lined with comfortable homes and great trees that were covered with the feathery verdure of early spring.

But his next statement drove the happiness out of her eyes.

"Do you know, I think Jadwin is getting to be a crackerjack lawyer. He has all the natural gifts for making himself a success."

"And one extra." She had not meant to say it, but it slipped out in spite of her.

"And what is that?" he questioned good-naturedly.

And then he had to wait a moment for her to answer: "That without being actually crooked he can maneuver to be not quite straight."

"I think you do him an injustice. I've always found him scrupulously honest."

"But he never would show himself otherwise—to you." Her tone was acid.

"No, I don't agree with you, daughter. If Jadwin were not honest, I believe I should be the first man to find it out."

"But that is just what I'm telling you—he's not really dishonest; certainly not enough so ever to get himself into trouble. And yet he's not quite honest, either. That's what I don't like about him. I wish he'd be one thing or the other."

"Mention something definite," he encouraged quietly.

"That's just it—I can't. If I were to mention any of the things I suspect, he could easily explain them away so perfectly that you'd feel that I ought to apologize for even thinking them."

He laughed pleasantly. "I think you are biased by prejudice. And perhaps there is a reason." He chuckled deep down in his throat. "Why do women invariably begin loving by hating? Is it some protective instinct in them that builds a foolish wall against certain surrender? My dear, I think you are in love with Jadwin, and I believe that for some intensely feminine reason you steel yourself with all these absurd fancies against him. But I believe you care for him—and I'm glad of it."

His hand left the wheel for a fleeting second to press down warm and comforting on hers. "Remember that, sweetheart, will you?—that I'm glad of it." He turned to let his keen gray eyes search her face for a moment.

But her own eyes saw him through a mist of tears. A terrible thought was driving like a hammer against her brain: "He isn't the man he used to be! If he were, a man like Jad couldn't influence him like this. He's getting older—losing that perfect judgment he always had."

She looked back in fancy over the long years of his great career, the big cases he had defended, the juries he had swayed; and suddenly her grief became too great to be suppressed. The sob she tried to strangle escaped, and the tears ran down her cheeks.

They were home now, and Colyer brought the car to a stop at the curb, in instant concern and contrition releasing the wheel to let his arm fall across her shoulders while he bent forward to see her face.

"My dear—forgive me! Please don't feel like this. Don't feel that I'm trying to urge you, that I ever would. I like

Jadwin, and he's continually coming to me about you. He's clean off his head over you. But don't think me a meddlesome old fool trying to interfere in a matter that is yours alone to decide."

Awkwardly he was pulling out his great, wadded handkerchief to wipe her tears. And in spite of the tears, she had to smile at the thought that, knowing him as she did, she would have known, without any actual knowledge of his recent activities, that it had been the nervous strain of a difficult case that had left his handkerchief wadded up like that.

They sat for a moment in silence. "Really, I'm not prejudiced against Jadwin, daddy," she said at last. "I could easily have let myself in for a casual flirtation with him when he first came here, if I had not sensed that it would be dangerous. He's good company, and he's good-looking. But I don't want to marry him. It is his continual insistence on wanting to be serious that distresses me. He wants to cement himself into our lives, where he doesn't belong. He doesn't think as we do, I tell you."

"But, my dear, what else can you expect a man to do, when he is in love with a woman?"

"Let her alone, if that is what she prefers."

"But that isn't human nature, honey."

Another silence ensued, through which her thoughts tugged distractedly at her dilemma. Of course she would not have to marry Jad; no one could or would even try to force her to.

But if she held out against him indefinitely, and for no other reason than that she vaguely distrusted him, he would win over her father's alliance, to the detriment of that long-established intimacy between her father and herself.

He had already partially won it now—unless her father could be made to see things that even in her own mind were vague and unformed.

Gently she laid her hand on her father's, and his turned beneath it so as to gather her fingers into his warm palm, while breathlessly she broke into speech as though she feared not being able to get to the end of what she was trying to say.

"Jad is clean off his head over me, yes; but he's clean off his head, too, over the material advantages being married to me would give him. He puts these ideas into

your head about my loving him and not wanting to admit it. Listen, dad—that wouldn't be like me. If I loved a man, I'd want the whole world to know it. You know that about me if you only stop to think. However, I'm not going to say anything against him to you ever again. We'll let matters drift as they are. But I'm going to watch for my chance—try to catch him at an unguarded moment when he can be seen as I really believe him to be. And then possibly I shall be able to show you just what I mean."

Her father did not answer, and she knew he was deeply troubled. He seemed to be studying the hand that he still held and turned in his fingers, and presently she drew it gently away and slipped out of the car to the sidewalk, glancing up the flagged walk to where lights were switched on suddenly behind shining windows.

Old Maria, who had been housekeeper long before Thais Colyer's mother died, was "lighting up" by way of welcome. There would be a crackling fire in the open grate in the dining room, and the table would be set with clean, fine linen, and an appetizing dinner fragrant and steaming. Lights, and comfort, and happiness! But no longer peace.

It was good to get home. She carried her hat, loitering bareheaded toward the friendly front door. Her father drove past her along the driveway to the garage. This was what Jadwin wanted to share, this exquisite sweetness.

### III

SHE managed to smile at him with accustomed friendliness when she met him at the office in the morning. She looked fresh and contented in her crisp white blouse with an enormous black velvet bow tie that somehow made her seem childish and defenseless. Jadwin's eyes clung to her when she came to take dictation.

According to their schedule, she gave her attentions to the senior partner first. So it had been done in "Hibbs's day," and so it continued to be.

Mark Colyer always started the day promptly, but his mail this morning had been unusually heavy, so that Jadwin was dismissing his second client before Thais was ready to go to him.

The client was a rough-looking individual. Few of his sort passed through the little glass doors marked "Private," and

Thais, back at her own desk, pad in hand, looked him up and down in frank astonishment as he edged out, step by step, deeply immersed in the closing sentences of the conversation.

He did not see her, as she was behind him, and, although she could not see inside the inner office, she knew Jadwin had not left his seat at his desk to see his unpleasant-looking visitor to the door. His voice, however, sounded distinctly friendly.

"Meet me up there at three this afternoon," he was saying. "Wait for me outside."

"Yes, sir."

Jadwin made no comment concerning his visitor as Thais came in and took her accustomed seat, but the fellow came back for further reassurance. Her back was toward him so that only her sleek, bowed head and the white nape of her neck must have been visible to him, but she knew his voice, listening to its mumbling inflections over her shoulder.

"That's on Fourth Avenue between Vine and Chester Streets, ain't it, sir?" he questioned.

Jadwin flushed darkly. "Yes." And then he added sharply: "You know that as well as I do."

The other mumbled an apology, and she heard his footsteps shuffling out. She knew that Jadwin was deeply annoyed over the incident, but she stared straight down at her pad, and gave no sign of curiosity on the subject.

Her thoughts were not idle, however. On Fourth Avenue, between Vine and Chester Streets, was the county jail. Being a criminal lawyer, there was nothing unusual, of course, in Jadwin meeting a client there, or in his going there to call on one; but she was familiar enough with his present cases to know that this visit did not concern any of them. His carefully preserved silence on the subject struck her as the most significant fact of all.

Ordinarily she would have had no curiosity about it, but her recent, still burning resentment made flame out of fancies that she would instantly have smothered heretofore. In every atom of mystery she suspected trickery that might be revealed to prove her claims against him.

It was his final letter that gave her the key. "In behalf of my client, Mr. John Swinert," he dictated, "under arrest for burglary—"

So that was it! Jadwin had undertaken Swinert's defense. Legal gossip said that Swinert had no defense; he was an old offender, and no one, it was thought, could save him from serving thirty years.

But, on the other hand, Jadwin never undertook cases that were avowedly hopeless. Taking this one meant that he undoubtedly "had something up his sleeve." And that "something" was of course connected with this afternoon's visit to the jail.

She wished she could be there to see what took place. Of course, her strained relations with Jadwin made that out of the question, unless—after all, was anything ever quite out of the question?

She laid her plan, not without misgivings, assuring herself from time to time that the mere doing of a bit of reconnoitering need not involve her in any difficulties. Craftily she refrained from giving Jadwin the most important of the day's messages that came to her, reserving it as an excuse for her next move.

Jadwin left the office ten minutes before three o'clock, and she went out five minutes behind him.

Her father was waiting for a client, and she looked in on him as she passed his door.

"May I take the car for half an hour and save myself a taxi bill?" she asked him.

He nodded. "Where are you going?" he wanted to know.

She made a rueful little face, blinking rapidly in mock dismay, which was the signal between them that she was stealing time to go out and purchase something that had probably tempted her from a shop window. She seldom confided the details of these feminine vanities, and he never asked about them.

He smiled now, condescendingly, from the heights of masculinity several planes above such frivolity, and motioned for her to be gone.

In truth, she did concern herself with a bit of finery, but it was on display in the millinery shop on the ground floor of their own building, and required less than five minutes to purchase.

It was a flame-colored hat, a daring bit of headgear that she had admired in passing the day before. She tried it on before a long mirror, tilting it this way and that, patting it close to her head at the desired angle

until the scarlet fabric seemed molded against the sheen of her hair.

Then, wearing it, she emerged and went to the car, at the curb.

She drove slowly through the radiant sunshine, and when she came in sight of the Vine Street and Fourth Avenue corner she saw Jadwin's car standing, empty, in front of the great stone jail.

She proceeded to park hers close behind it, and walked briskly up the walk to the covered entrance.

Inside she turned to the sheriff's private office, on the right. A deputy was sitting at a desk, a deputy whom she knew. She recognized, and was known by, almost every one of any importance in criminal legal circles in the city.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Pollard. Mr. Jadwin is here, isn't he? And I've got to see him for a minute. I've a message for him. Will you let me go down?"

She strolled toward him, and he got to his feet, smiling, drinking in the radiant freshness of her with admiring eyes.

"He is seeing Swinert, isn't he?" he questioned casually.

It was as she had sensed. "Yes," she said.

Leisurely he reached for the bell that summoned a uniformed individual to whom he gave directions.

She followed the uniformed man, pausing while he unlocked the heavy iron door, and waiting while he locked it again behind them.

Outside a cell on one of the lower tiers she found Jadwin, in company with his unkempt visitor of the morning. Their approach over the stone floors made sufficient noise to attract his attention, and when he saw who was coming he straightened his shoulders and instantly started to come and meet them.

But Thais's hurrying footsteps brought her near enough to see the occupant of the cell before Jadwin could get far enough to halt her. With yellow fingers clutching the bars and scowling face thrust out in eager confab was Swinert. She recognized him unmistakably from the pictures that had scowled from the front pages of all the news-sheets a month before.

From Swinert she let her glance shift to his other visitor. It was the first time the latter had seen her; she knew she had passed unnoticed by him in Jadwin's office that morning.

Now she looked him straight in the eyes, and she was aware that she made a striking picture in her flame-colored hat against the drab background of the jail walls. The creature stared at her in candid fascination, and she gave back his glance steadily with the hint of a smile hovering about her lips.

Then she turned to Jadwin. "I heard you arranging to come here; that is how I knew where to find you. And as I was out with the car anyway it seemed simpler to stop than to try and have them get you to the phone. I wanted to let you know that Merkins telephoned in that he has those papers. The message came while you were out at lunch, and I don't know how it ever slipped my mind to tell you about it when you came in. But of course I know you'll want to see him to-day."

He was obviously annoyed, but he permitted her to finish.

"But I was coming right back to the office from here," he said.

"I wasn't sure of that." Her tone was entirely humble. "I never can be sure of that—with you." Her voice had never been so soft, and instantly the annoyance left his face, and a little twinkle of triumph came into his eyes. She knew what he thought; it was easy for such as he to believe he was gaining favor.

"I'll stop and see Merkins on my way down," he commented briskly, but his eyes dwelt on her face.

She turned away. "I'm sorry to have forgotten," she apologized, and turned to follow her uniformed escort. After pausing again on the way out to thank the deputy, she walked slowly out to the car, and her mind was fretted with its thoughts.

There was not a thing in Jadwin's manner or movements to indicate anything amiss with his transaction, and yet she sensed something intangibly wrong, something she could not name. She had sensed these things before, but she had never attempted to prove them.

#### IV

JADWIN got back to his office not many minutes behind her. He waited, as she had feared he would wait, for the moment when she took his letters in to him to sign. Then he rose, and closed the door behind her.

"So—you can never be sure, with me, that I'll come back! Well, suppose I make you sure—sure of my coming back to you every evening at dinner time?"



His arms that for months had been restive with desire to embrace her achieved their purpose at last. There was no evading them. She tried and failed; nothing could make her call her father from behind his own closed door.

She knew too well how ridiculous Jadwin would make her look if she did that; so she submitted passively.

She had thrown Jadwin that one small challenge in the jail corridor; she had done it to distract his attention from the fact that she was meddling in his affairs. This was her punishment, and she took it in silence.

He released her slowly and with caution. He was obviously aware of the wild cat in her that might fight back when its opportunity came.

But she was wiser than her anger. She accepted what he had done without response or comment, turning from him and going quietly out of the room. Whatever happened, she must not force an issue—not yet, while she remained unprepared to defend it.

But she would have to go ahead now and prepare. There was no turning back.

The incident did not greatly alter matters at the office. Jadwin watched her now with that new little twinkle of triumph always in his eyes. And, a few days later, as she was going out from dictation, he stopped her again and, swiftly pinning her arms to her sides with his great hands, bent and kissed her unguarded lips.

"You're teasing me, holding back this way," he said indulgently, "but you're not fooling me one bit. It is all right; I'm not the sort to hurry you. I can wait."

She started to leave him, and then stopped. To remain silent was not "playing the game."

"My feelings toward you, Jad, haven't changed one bit," she said. "I endure this sort of thing because you've got me at a disadvantage. I wouldn't ask my father's protection from you for anything; I know you're too strong with him, just now. I refuse to be driven out of this office by anything you can do. But some day—I'm just praying that some day fate will give me a card to play against you—an ace or a trump. Now, that's playing you fair."

That too, as she was also aware, might be giving him sufficient warning to spoil her chances. But he refused to accept the warning.

"I know women," he said complacently, "a little better than that."

The desperation the incident created in her spoiled her appetite for lunch. On her way back to the office she knew that she was rash enough now to go through with the plan that had gradually been taking form in her mind.

The fact that Mr. Arnold, the district attorney, chanced to go up in the elevator with her gave to her courage its final impulse. Mr. Arnold's offices were in the same building, on the floor above the Colyer & Jadwin suite.

Instead of getting off at her own floor, she continued on to the next. When the keen-eyed, white-haired little prosecutor started up the corridor, she trailed him and halted him.

"Mr. Arnold!" Her voice sounded tight and strained from nervousness. "May I have a word with you? Can you spare me a minute now?"

"I think so. Certainly. Come in."

He admitted her fussily, conducting her past his wondering-eyed secretary into his private office with its glass-topped desk.

Seated facing his polite attention across a corner of its shining surface, her courage nearly suffered destruction. Her poise deserted her.

"Perhaps this is a fool's errand I've come for," she blurted. "I'm perfectly sure it is the sort of errand I've no business to come on. But I'm reckless—and I'm 'playing a hunch.' Sometimes my hunches are good," she defended herself, "but I'd have to have your coöperation in order to test this one. And no doubt you will consider it highly absurd. Still—"

He smiled, his keen little eyes appraising her. "Let's hear about it," he encouraged. Mark Colyer's daughter was deferred to, not for his sake alone, but for her own. It was frequently and openly lamented that her qualities had not been vested in a son.

She hesitated a minute, turning round and round on her little finger the scarab ring she always wore outside her glove, the good-luck stone her father had given her, too large to fit inside the kid finger, but never definitely removed from her hand.

"My father," she began presently, "frequently uses a bit of psychology in the matter of cross-examining witnesses—I don't know whether or not you believe in it, but it is this—he tries to startle a wit-

ness's mind with a new and unexpected line of thought.

"If the testimony being given happens to be the truth, of course it is seldom affected by the change of questions. But if it isn't true, such a change will frequently throw a witness entirely off his guard, will make him forget momentarily the basic thing he is trying to prove or conceal, and often in that way he will unintentionally reveal something invaluable to the opposing side. Mr. Hibbs used to smile at the idea, but I've seen it succeed too many times to doubt its value."

She saw that she had the lawyer's interest; his glance seemed to be boring into her thoughts like a gimlet.

"I believe in it too," he said; "although you must admit every one is not as expert as your father at using it."

She hesitated, afraid to say what was on her tongue.

"I've been wishing," she said slowly at last, "that I could see it used at the Swinert trial, next week. Who, from your office, is going to prosecute Swinert?"

"I am."

She nodded, meaning that she had known it to be a case of sufficient importance to command his personal attention.

Again she hesitated. It was hard going on.

"Of course, I may be wrong, but—well, if Swinert offers an alibi, I wish you might ask his witness if he has ever seen me, and where, and when."

"Do you expect Swinert to offer an alibi?"

"I don't know. That is only a suspicion on my part. Mr. Jadwin is defending the case, and of course he doesn't discuss his cases with me."

She caught her breath. It was as though she glimpsed in some mental mirror the reflection of the possible outcome of this traitorous thing she was endeavoring to do; for she could not deny that her tactics threatened to make her father's partner lose the Swinert case.

Mr. Arnold's eyes dropped from hers to where his fat, white hand was fussing with a letter opener on his desk. But before they dropped she caught their look of skepticism. His voice, too, lacked enthusiasm.

"But what fact do you hope to bring out by such a question as that? And why do you want to upset the defense?"

Breathlessly she told him, reserving all the confidences she dared. One thing he obviously understood—that she was playing a woman's game, the influences of which spread far beyond the confines of any court. If it could be done without damage to his personal interests, he was willing to aid her.

"But," he demurred, "it would be useless. The question is irrelevant; Jadwin would object to it, and, if I tried to explain it, the witness would get wise and prepare his reply. And if I did not explain satisfactorily, the judge would sustain Jadwin's objection."

She grew thoughtful. "This case comes up before Judge Parker, doesn't it? Something might be done."

## V

SOMETHING WAS.

That is to say, Thais Colyer walked home that evening with Judge Parker. The stately, white-haired veteran of the bench walked the ten blocks between his home and the courthouse every day that the weather permitted throughout the year.

And on this evening, since the weather permitted, Thais left the office early to avoid driving home with her father, and invented a fictitious errand in the drug store Judge Parker had to pass, emerging innocently upon the sidewalk at the very moment of his passing.

Naturally she joined him. His way led up the long Vine Street hill, and, because he was an old man, their pace was slow. They talked of the spring and city politics, the judge's sciatica, and the Quigley murder trial—and, last of all, they talked of the Swinert case.

The judge could not have told, at the moment, why they should have selected such a topic as the Swinert case. When the reason finally did become clear to him he chuckled in amusement.

"You see, it would be an irrelevant question, really." He had been hurried past the crucial point in the conversation, and found himself listening to her eager argument, slightly aghast, he who had been rendered astonishment-proof by forty years on the bench.

And then he laughed, so heartily that people out making a before-dinner inspection of spring gardens turned to look.

"By George, I could almost be persuaded to grant this absurd request you're trying

to wheedle me into, if you'd come out with the truth, and tell me just why you are trying to show Jadwin up."

He had crashed straight through the transparency of her pretenses, and found her incentive. She flushed. Her eyes gazed straight ahead into the crimson of the sunset that was dyeing the crest of Vine Street. She knew it was useless to try to evade the truth—before him.

"I don't care about showing him up to any one but my father. If my father could know him as I believe he is, he'd stop wanting me to marry him. I don't want to marry him. There is nobody else I want to marry, either.

"I go out with various men to dances and dinners and shows, but there is nobody I care about—that way; so I'd almost consider accepting Jadwin, since he and my father both desire it so much, if only I could believe that Jadwin is the sort of man to play square. I wish he was, but I'm sure he's not. I could never depend on him to be absolutely on the level, always, about everything—not as I depend on father—not as I would have to feel I could depend on any man I had to spend my life with."

"I see!" The judge grew suddenly grave. "In other words, you don't love him."

"Maybe that's it."

"You wouldn't care what he was if you loved him. Women are like that. But, now, your aim is to end your father's pressure in the matter, and you think that can be accomplished by making him see that Jadwin's standards are not what he believes them to be."

"Yes."

"Will your father be in court during the Swinert case?"

Her voice had gathered courage. "He will if I can invent any excuse to get him there," she said.

"That means that you are already counting on me." He gave her a smiling, side-wise glance. "But even if I agree to assist, your little plan is much more likely to fail than to succeed. My dear girl, you are using your time and energy and brains to construct an elaborate trap, baiting it with your own personality, at the risk of exposing yourself to ridicule and humiliation if it fails to catch your quarry—and the chances are strong that the trap will never make a catch."

She nodded. "I know. Still, that is a

chance I'll have to take. There is no hope of my ever tripping Jadwin up on a big deal; he is much too clever for that. It is some little knavery that has got to be used to show him up, if it is ever done at all."

His eyes were staring thoughtfully into the sunset at the top of the hill. "After all, women's small plannings have been known to cause the downfall of nations—and of gods."

They had reached the entrance to his stately stone residence, and the last streak from the crimson sun dropped from view. Thais shivered.

They came crowding upon her suddenly, all the cold, commonplace little facts she had forgotten—that she had walked blocks out of her way, that she was inexpressibly weary, and that the friendly white door of home was halfway across the city of gloom and twilight. She felt desolate and shorn of all courage as she pushed on up the hill, alone.

## VI

THE Swinert trial opened. The prosecution soon rested its case, and Jadwin finished outlining the defense. Swinert's plea had been a flat "Not guilty."

Mark Colyer was in court. He had no case on that day, but Thais had reminded him that he must visit the courthouse some time during the day regarding certain documents, and had suggested that his best time to do so—the time she had carefully kept free of appointments—was the middle of the afternoon.

When that time arrived she had made the unusual decision to walk over with him. And when they arrived she had suggested looking in for a minute on the Swinert trial. She had already received information by telephone as to what progress was being made.

If Mark Colyer suspected a motive behind her movements, he said nothing. He simply humored her. It would be like him, she reflected, to do just that. Whether in truth he did guess she never knew.

She was wearing her flame-colored hat, its smart brilliancy enhanced by the trim dark lines of her tailored clothes.

She saw that she had timed their entrance perfectly. Jadwin's first witness was taking the stand—a dull-looking individual who eyed the court room shifty, and answered the questions with stolid readiness.

"Where were you on the night of Oc-

tober 3 last, between about eleven thirty and midnight?" Jadwin was asking.

"On Cheney Street, between Fogarty Square and Leadman Place."

"What were you doing there?"

"Waitin' to meet a friend."

"Did you meet the friend?"

"No, sir. He didn't show up."

"Do you see any one in this court room now whom you by any chance happened to see while you were there on Cheney Street, the night of October 3?"

"Yes, sir. Him." He indicated Swinert at the defense table.

"Did he speak to you?"

"Yes, sir. He asked me fer a light."

"How long were you talking to him?"

"Oh, 'most half an hour."

Thais stole a look at her father's face. She wondered if Jadwin had talked this case over with him. He seemed keenly interested in hearing Swinert produce an alibi, for, if this witness spoke the truth, Swinert was nowhere near the scene of the crime for which he was being tried.

"Let's sit down a few minutes and listen," she whispered, and without giving him a chance to slip into a rear seat she started silently up the aisle.

She knew that he was following her, and her heart seemed to be beating somewhere up close to her throat. Her knees were shaking and her hands trembling as she slipped into a seat just outside the railing where she was concealed from the gaze of the witness by Jadwin's great, upstanding figure between.

She sat with lowered eyes, scarcely daring to breathe, through the minutes that followed. At times the slight stirring movements about her, and the two voices questioning and answering, seemed lost in some vague, blurred distance; then they would all take shape and sound again, unbearably sharp, and close, and clear. She found it harder to breathe.

Jadwin turned his witness over for cross-examination, and sat down.

Mr. Arnold rose, and his first question stirred the entire court room with a ripple of surprise.

"Mr. Peterson," he addressed the witness, and stepped to one side so as to bring Thais Colyer and her flame-colored hat full into the man's view, "have you ever seen this young lady before?"

"I object!" Jadwin was on his feet protesting.

And Arnold was also clamoring. "Your honor, I'm trying to show the court—"

What he was trying to show the court was lost under the judge's gavel.

"Objection overruled."

The question stood. "Have you ever seen this young lady before?"

The wondering, stupid eyes of the witness met those of Thais Colyer, and she smiled faintly. She was thinking that she was glad she had rouged a little, else she must surely be too white to be recognized.

It must be a ghastly smile that she was smiling, but it was trying to say: "It's all right. I'm your lawyer's friend; I'm on your side in this business. Of course you've seen me before. Tell them."

The man's slow brain wrestled a moment with this upsetting question. The girl's smile was friendly and reassuring; it must be all right. Of course he knew, unforgettably, where he had seen that level, smiling glance under that flame-colored hat.

"At the jail," he said.

"When?" The question whisked up his answer.

"Week before last."

"You went there—for what?"

"With Mr. Jadwin—to see Swinert."

"You'd never seen Swinert before?"

"No, sir." The man's mind was obviously staggering among these strange questions whose purpose he was too slow to understand.

But Jadwin was again on his feet, and the witness caught the damning significance of his admission in his lawyer's purpling face.

"I mean—yes, sir—I'd seen him before."

"Your honor, I object!" Jadwin was shouting in panic. "These questions are misleading my witness!"

There was stir and commotion.

The judge silenced it. "Now, then"—he himself put the question to the witness—"which answer is true? Had you or had you not seen the defendant before the day when you saw this young lady at the jail?"

"Yes, sir, I'd seen him like I told you—that night on Cheney Street."

Jadwin's broad shoulders relaxed in obvious relief; a great peril for him was safely passed. It would require effort and skill to repair the slip his witness had made, but juries are the customary prey of a lawyer's eloquence. He had excellent chances of once more setting the matter to Swinert's



advantage; but he had come close to catastrophe!

It was safely evaded! Perhaps, so far as the jury was concerned; but to the legal element in that room the fact stood out like black on white—Jadwin had “framed” Swinert’s alibi. He had not merely accepted a soiled proposition with clean hands, but had soiled his own hands in helping to fashion it.

From all quarters, twinkling, comprehensive glances wheeled round to rest on Thais Colyer’s face, vivid now from its

deepening flush. Among them came Jadwin’s glance, barbed with fury.

But her own glance had sought the mask that was her father’s face. And the blood, that seemed to have paused in her veins in dread of his possible anger, quickened into rushing gladness that ran like wine to her very finger tips.

It did not matter to her whether or not Jadwin won his case; it did not matter what her father’s associates thought. Nothing mattered except the understanding and deliverance she found in her father’s eyes.

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# House Hunting

## A CHURCHWARDEN OF A COUNTRY PARISH TELLS A STRANGE STORY OF HIS EXPERIENCES IN A HAUNTED DWELLING

By Jerome K. Jerome

**T**HIS is a disbelieving age. Take haunted houses, for example. Why, when I started business as an auctioneer in this parish—I am a churchwarden now—there were dozens of them, scattered all about the country, that you couldn’t get rid of, not for love or money. Nowadays, if you can guarantee a ghost in connection with any old, broken-down shanty, you make a “feature” of it, and charge a premium.

There was a nice little house just below the bridge, when I first came here—the Croft, I think it was called. Tony Andrews—not the present one, but his uncle, the furniture dealer—was the last tenant, and was using it as a storehouse for what he called “antiques” when it caught fire and burned to the ground. Up till then he’d never had much use for God Almighty—boasted that he’d never been inside a church since he was christened. After the fire, nothing was good enough for him but a pew in the south aisle facing the pulpit, and if he wasn’t always there, anyhow he paid for it up to the day of his death. Gratitude, I suppose.

But all that came later. At the time of which I am speaking I was new to the

town; and the first I heard of the whole business was one evening in the bar of the Red Lion.

When I entered, Jimmy Vales, the carrier—we hadn’t any railway in those days—was standing by the bar, laying down the law, as he generally did.

“Myself,” he was saying, “I don’t believe in them.” Then, fixing a cold stare on Joe Larter, the tollkeeper, who was standing just behind him, he added: “And, to be quite candid, I don’t think much of any man as does.”

Mr. Larter replied by pointing out that what Mr. Vales believed or did not believe wasn’t the argument, and further suggested that because Mr. Vales didn’t happen to have seen a thing with his own eyes—he having had the misfortune to have been born with a squint—that didn’t prove that no such thing existed.

Mr. Vales retorted that on the other hand some people, and Joe Larter in particular, taking their Bible oath that they had seen it wouldn’t prove that it did—leastways, not to Mr. Vales. The discussion was threatening to become personal, when it was interrupted by a bald-headed, wizened little image of a man named Billy

Nutall, who, according to his own account, was ninety years of age, but who looked older.

Mr. Nutall, who said he had a presentiment that he wasn't going to be among us much longer in the flesh, was willing to settle the dispute by returning to earth—that is, if such a thing was permitted and was possible—and appearing to Mr. Vales. If Mr. Nutall's ghost did not make itself apparent to Mr. Vales—even allowing for the squint—within a reasonable time after the funeral, then Mr. Vales might rest assured that he was right—that the departed, try as they would, could not return to the scenes of their former existence.

Most of the room considered the offer a very handsome one, but Mr. Vales himself, speaking in a tone of more amiability than was his wont, expressed his opinion that Mr. Nutall, in his new abode, would be much too happy to trouble himself any further about things here below, including Mr. Vales.

"It won't be any trouble, Jim," insisted the old man. "I might be doing you a service—leading you to break yourself of that silly habit of thinking you know everything. You're frequently out late at night with your cart, and where the road dips through the wood there are one or two places that I've often thought would make good cover for a ghost. If the thing is within my ability, and the Lord sees no harm in it, you can reckon on me somewhere between here and Newbury the very first night that I can get away. I shan't forget it."

Well, somehow, after that the conversation flagged. Those who had any distance to go thought they ought to be starting. Mr. Saltash, the gamekeeper, whose way lay past a chalk pit which had got itself the name, though nobody knew why, of Dead Man's Bottom, borrowed a lantern from the landlord, notwithstanding that up till then he'd always claimed that he could see in the dark better than nine cats out of ten. Vales, murmuring something about his kidneys and a chilly night, had an extra four-pennyworth of gin and took his departure; and three men quarreled as to who should have the privilege of seeing old Mr. Nutall safely home through Red Pits Lane. It ended in all three of them going with him.

There remained in the bar only Bob Crisp, who was then a clerk in Martin's

office, Joe Larter, the tollkeeper, George Pennywise, the barber—with whom, being then a bachelor, I was lodging—and myself.

So soon as the door had ceased banging I asked Walters, the landlord, what it had all been about.

"Well, it began," he said, "with talk about the Croft, Mrs. McFadden's house down by the river. There used to be a ghost there years ago, when I was a boy. Now, according to Joe, it's suddenly reappeared."

"Who's seen it?" asked Bob Crisp.

"My wife's niece," answered Joe Larter. "She's in service there. She was sitting alone in what they call the servants' hall, reading a book. She lifts up her eyes, and there he was standing in the doorway. She could see the door, which was on the jar, behind him, or rather through him, so to speak. He was looking at her with a sad expression."

"It's a funny thing," says old Walters. "He's been quiet all these years. Wonder what can have happened to him all of a sudden!"

"He may have been there all the time, and unable to attract attention," says Joe. "Emma has a sympathetic nature. People have a way of coming to her with their troubles."

"If I were Mrs. McFadden," says Bob, "I'd give that niece of yours a five-pun note to go somewhere miles away and stay there. Looks as if he'd taken a fancy to her, and might follow her."

"It isn't a thing to make fun of," says Walters. "For Mrs. McFadden it's hard luck. She was thinking of selling the house, and going to live abroad on account of her rheumatism. Now she won't be able to."

We talked a little more until the clock struck ten, and then I got up to go. Pennywise said he'd come too.

As soon as we were outside, he asked me what I thought the house was worth.

In the ordinary way, I told him, about eight hundred pounds. Prices were different in those days.

"If she'd take five," he says, "I might be able to get it for her. I'd like to do her a good turn."

"We'll see about laying the ghost first," I answered him. "Myself, I'm inclined to agree with Bob Crisp, that it's just the girl's imagination."

Somehow I had never liked the fellow, though it's always easy to say that afterward.

"If she doesn't see it again, that 'll prove it," he says. "I hope she doesn't, for the old lady's sake."

## II

I HAD meant to go over the next day and introduce myself to Mrs. McFadden, in case there was a chance of doing business; but, as luck would have it, while I was at breakfast there came a telegram calling me away to the other side of Reading, and I didn't get back till near eleven o'clock.

The shop was all dark, and I had come away without my key, so I went around to the back. It was as dark as the front, but to my surprise the kitchen door was open. I left it on the latch, and made my way upstairs. I had the first floor.

I had just blown out the candle when Pennywise came in and began knocking things about in the kitchen. I knew it was George, because I heard him swearing, though as a rule he was a mild-spoken young fellow. He finished up with what I judged to be a combination of saucepans and crockery, and that brought down his wife.

"Where are you, George?" she says. "Why don't you strike a light?"

"Why the deuce don't you," he returns, "instead of standing there and asking silly questions?"

"Well, give me your matches, if you haven't sense enough to use them yourself," she tells him.

"Oh, take 'em," he says, "if you're so jolly clever!"

I could hear her scraping away. "Why, they're all wet," she says. "Why, and you're all wet, George," she adds the next moment. "What in the world have you been doing?"

"Doing?" he says. "Getting caught in the rain. What do you think I've been doing—swimming?"

"Rain!" she says. "But we haven't had any rain."

"I have," he says. "One of those sudden storms," he goes on to explain, "that are gone almost as soon as they've come. It's a common phenomenon of nature," he says, "this time of the year."

They got a light at last, and I gathered that he was washing himself in the sink.

Suddenly his wife says, speaking in a surprised tone of voice:

"George," she says, "are you sure it was rain?"

"Oh, Lord!" he says. "Haven't you heard of it before? I tell you it was rain."

"Well, it doesn't smell like it," she says.

"Oh, not so much talk about it!" he growls. "Leave the thing alone! I'll see to it myself in the morning."

A little later I heard them creeping up to bed. George stopped just outside my door to sneeze, and had another fit when he got to his own room. I lay awake for awhile, wondering, because I knew quite well there hadn't been any rain.

In the morning I got a clew. Young Crisp comes up just as I was opening my office door in the High Street.

"I want a talk with you," he says.

As soon as we were seated, he told me.

"I called at the Croft last evening," he says. "She's a client of ours. She was there all alone, trying to light a fire. She's over seventy, to say nothing of the rheumatism. The girl had taken herself off the evening before—said she daren't spend another night there. She'd promised to come back in the morning, but never had. I found her at last—she was at her grandmother's, on the other side of the lock—and insisted on her coming back with me. I promised to stay as long as she was in the house and then see her home."

"She slipped into it all right when she was there, got the old girl her supper, which I shared, and tidied up the house, while we sat there with the door wide open, so that we could hear her in case she screamed. We heard her a little after ten o'clock. She had gone upstairs to do the bedrooms. I had just put a piece of cold rabbit in my mouth, and it very nearly went down the wrong way and choked me. You'd have thought she had seen the devil himself."

"I rushed out. She was sitting in a heap at the top of the kitchen stairs, with her apron over her head. At the bottom of the stairs was the pail she had been carrying, and round about it were most of its contents. I got some brandy down her throat, and then she explained that she had just reached the landing at the top of the stairs when, looking over the banisters, she saw him below her. He was all in black, and had the same sad expression that she had noticed before."

"It took us some time to clear up the mess, and I had to see her back to her grandmother's; but of course that settles it. She'll stick to her story, and by the end of the week it'll be all over the country. The old lady's a wonder. She bolted the door after us, and assured me she'd be all right; but what she's going to do I don't know. Nobody'll take the house as a gift, and not a servant will stop there with her."

"There's one thing to be thankful for," I says, "and that is that all the contents of that pail weren't wasted."

"What do you mean?" he asks.

"A goodish dose of the water," I says, "was absorbed by George Pennywise."

Then I told him what I had overheard the night before.

"We've got to keep quiet about this," says Bob, so soon as I'd finished. "Of course he'd deny it, and there would be no proving it. The thing to do is to catch him at it."

### III

It was all over the town next morning that Mrs. McFadden intended to stick it out. She had arranged for a woman to come in during the day, and had got a young nephew to stay with her. If she saw the ghost herself, she said, she would believe in him. If his disappearance coincided with Emma's departure, the explanation would be simple.

Most people applauded her pluck, but Bob Crisp maintained that it was foolhardiness, and that if she didn't mind what happened to herself she ought at least to consider the boy. Bob had dropped in while I was being shaved. There were only the three of us in the shop.

"My advice to her," he went on, "would be to sell the house for anything she can get, and clear out." He turns to George, who was just then busy lathering me. "Weren't you saying something the other night about a friend of yours?" he asks him.

"I did have a man in my mind," answers Pennywise. "He's a London chap who has made a bit of money in the second-hand clothes line, and is thinking of retiring; but now, after what has happened, I doubt if he'd give even as much as I thought he might."

"According to an old manuscript that she's discovered," says Bob, "it all de-

pends upon the 31st of October. If he doesn't appear on the last day of this very month, it will prove that his troubled spirit is at rest, and will never appear any more. That's what she's banking on."

He took his place in the chair, and George got ready to shave him.

"Don't say anything about it, either of you," he cautions us. "As a matter of fact, I oughtn't to have mentioned it."

Well, I kept my eyes and ears open, as I had promised Bob I would; and a day or two later I was able to report to him that George had told his wife that he'd be going to Illsley on the 31st, to see a man about some ferrets, and that she wasn't to sit up for him.

Bob does a dance twice round my office, and then slips across and turns the key in the door.

"There was only one other thing that was worrying me," he says, "and that was how he managed to get in. The old lady was certain all the doors and windows had been fastened that night when he got the pail over him; and yesterday we solved the mystery. There's a heavy oak door in one of the cellars that used to be part of the crypt. It looks as solid as a rock until you push it, and then it topples over on its side, the brickwork behind having crumbled away, and you find yourself in the malt house. From there you can step out into the orchard by half a dozen different ways. That's how he'll go in; and if he tries to come out the same way, that's where you and I'll be waiting for him."

"Wouldn't it be better for us to be inside the house," I says, "and catch him there?"

"We'll be more useful outside," says Bob. "Inside, welcome has been provided for him. Mrs. McFadden has a cousin in Oxford, a sort of an old professor. He's keen on ghosts—'psychical research,' I think they call it—and he'll bring a friend with him. If by any chance they miss him inside, and he does a bolt through a door or window, we'll give chase."

Well, it sounded all right, and humanly speaking it ought to have worked out all right.

The professor and his friend, a Mr. Capper, a young schoolmaster from Reading, arrived late in the evening, and slipped into the house unobserved. Mrs. McFadden and the boy went to bed early, to be out of the way; and Bob and I, hidden in the



shrubbery, saw a muffled figure steal into the malt house sometime after eleven. There was no doubt in our minds as to its being George Pennywise; and to this day I am still convinced it was.

What took place inside the house was told us by young Capper, the professor not being in a state to be sure what had happened or what hadn't.

Mrs. McFadden had given them the idea of what to expect; and they had settled themselves comfortably in the servants' hall with a little refreshment and a dark lantern. It was in the old part of the house, a vaulted room with a stone floor. The door leading to the cellar was opposite the fireplace, between the dresser and the bacon cupboard. They had shut themselves in a little before ten o'clock, Mrs. McFadden having explained to them its habit of appearing early; and to while away the time had started telling each other ghost stories, which may have been a mistake.

They were feeling chilly, the fire having burned low, and were considering the possibility of getting some more coal, when they heard the distant grating of a door. They let down the shutter of the lantern and drew back their chairs into the dark. The door slowly opened, and a hooded figure entered and moved without a sound across the room. There was just sufficient glimmer from the fire for them to notice that it was dressed in a monk's robe and had nothing on its feet. It was about to pass through the door into the house when Mr. Capper spoke to it.

"Who are you?" Mr. Capper asked.

The figure turned, and without a moment's loss of time, started to go back by the way it had come. Mr. Capper, however, was too quick. He locked the cellar door and put the key in his pocket.

"Speak!" said the professor. "What is it that you want?"

The figure had halted in the middle of the room. Its face was faintly visible beneath the overhanging cowl. According to Mr. Capper, it looked more frightened than sad.

"Tell us all about it," said young Capper. "What's the trouble?"

"Why are you unable to rest?" asked the professor.

Well, of course, George couldn't tell them, because he didn't know. I call him George, there being no question in my

mind that it was George Pennywise. He did the best that he could think of under the circumstances, and gave a hollow groan.

"I don't believe he is a ghost!" said Capper.

"One can't be sure," says the professor. "Some of them have been known to speak, and others don't."

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do," says young Capper. "I'm going to throw this empty jug at his head. If it passes through him and breaks on the stones behind him, that will settle it."

Not liking this test, George gave the most blood-curdling groan of which he was capable, and, fortunately for him, the professor interposed.

"It might anger him," says the old gentleman; "and that, if he really is a spirit, might have serious consequences."

It was plain to young Capper that the professor was getting nervous.

"Well, he won't talk," says Capper, "and he shows no sign of vanishing. So far as I can see, we'll all be here till cock crow, and that won't be for another six hours."

Capper thought this might hurry things up. The ghost, he noticed, was shifting about from one bare foot to the other, evidently feeling the cold.

"One story is," says the professor, "that for some reason or another he was never properly buried. If his remains could be discovered and given Christian burial, that might lay him."

The ghost seems to have closed on this suggestion with alacrity. Looking a bit more cheerful, he points down toward the cellar. George's hope, no doubt, was that once in the cellar, while they were poking about with their noses to the ground, he would be able to slip out; and young Capper, knowing that Bob and I would be there waiting for him, and being himself a lightweight, and the professor not to be relied upon, thought it would be the best ending.

Young Capper unlocks the door, while the professor was fumbling with the lantern, and finding it unexpectedly hot. Capper pulls open the door, and stands with it in his hand, a little behind it, so to speak. The professor was still struggling with the lantern, and Capper and the ghost were watching him. He found the shutter at last, and raised it.

The light fell upon the open doorway, and in it there stood a truly awful apparition in a monk's robe, with its cowl over its head. The thing hadn't any face—not properly speaking. Except for the eyes, it was nothing but a skull.

Somebody, or something, gave the screech of its life; but whether it was the ghost, or both of them, or the professor himself, young Capper was not certain. The next moment the professor falls down with a thud on the floor, and the lantern goes out.

Bob had been keeping an eye on the malt house, and I was watching the other side of the house. We heard the screech. My own idea is that the whole four of them must have joined in. A second or two later I saw a hooded figure dart out of the shrubbery. I gave chase, expecting soon to overtake it, George being a heavy man, and I in those days pretty good as a sprinter. To my surprise, it reached the other end of the paddock still well ahead of me, and took the hedge, together with the ditch beyond, at one bound. It wasn't until Bob, coming up a trifle later, had hauled me out by my legs, that it came to me that I must have tried to do the same. We agreed that whatever the thing was it could not have been George, and hurried back to the house.

We found a door open. Mrs. McFadden, in a flannel petticoat and a nightcap, was talking volubly. The professor, at our entrance, had a relapse, but recovered; and young Capper explained to us what had happened.

Mrs. McFadden's sympathies seemed to be more with herself than with anybody else, which, perhaps, was only human. If she was to be haunted, then she preferred her own ghost—a gentle creature, from all accounts, with nothing worse about him than a melancholy expression. As for this indecent Guy Fawkes sort of apparition, described by the professor and young Capper, it had never been seen in her house before, and her opinion was that they had brought it with them.

As Bob explained to me afterward, it was her calling the apparition a Guy Fawkes that gave him the inspiration. He slaps his leg and turns to her.

"How's that young nephew of yours, Mrs. McFadden?" he says. "He seems a pretty sound sleeper."

For a moment she stands speechless.

Then, snatching up the candle, she disappears.

His bed had never been slept in. He was nowhere to be found.

Well, that turned out to be the explanation. He'd heard a lot of talk about the ghost, when he wasn't supposed to have been listening; and, gathering that a couple of gentlemen were coming all the way from Oxford on purpose to see it, he had thought, no doubt, that they'd be disappointed if they didn't. He had found an old mackintosh belonging to his late uncle, and, it being near the 5th of November, he had no difficulty in purchasing a mask that must have seemed to him the ideal thing. One doesn't expect boys to think, and his idea was that he would be providing everybody with innocent amusement. When the professor went down with a thud he thought he'd killed the poor old gentleman, and never stopped till he reached his own home, the other side of Abingdon, at four o'clock in the morning.

It was all as plain as houses, if folks would only have believed it. Unfortunately, owing to the professor having to be taken back to Oxford in an ambulance, while old Mr. Hodgson, who had been sitting up with a cow, had seen a hooded figure gliding along the towpath near the bridge, and Jimmy Vales, driving along the Newbury road, had seen another, moving across the fields at the rate, according to his estimate, of forty miles an hour in the direction of Didcot, the general conviction came to be that Mrs. McFadden must be the possessor, not of a single ghost, but of a nest of them.

Luckily, a short time afterward, she came into a little money and was able to go abroad.

The thing that consoled me was that George Pennywise hadn't turned out a winner. His own version was that, passing near to the house on his way home, and seeing a light, he had looked through the window. What he saw he could never explain, but he seems to have arrived at his own back door babbling about his sins, and it took his wife the best part of an hour to get him out from under the sink and persuade him that she wasn't the devil coming to punish him. After that, he went to bed with the jaundice.

But, as I have said, nowadays I'd put an extra two hundred pounds on the price of that house, and get it.

# Her Wayward Husband

THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF MRS. BILCHER, WHO BECAME  
A DETECTIVE IN ORDER TO TRAIL HER GUILTY  
SPOUSE TO HIS LOVE NEST

By Ellis Parker Butler

WHEN I saw the advertisement that said "Be a detective in twelve lessons," I sat right down, filled out the coupon, and sent it in.

I am a sewing woman. I go from one house to another—one day at one place, and maybe a week at another, and so on; and if there is any gossip in town I hear it. I hear enough to make any woman suspicious of any husband. There is no end of talk in Riverbank. The people I work for seem to think I ought to know everything that is going on, and I guess I do know as much as the next one. What they don't tell me, hoping I will tell them something else, I hear when two or three women are talking in the next room.

I did not marry Mr. Bilcher until I was forty. I was living in a boarding house kept by a Mrs. Jones when Mr. Bilcher came to Riverbank from Derlingport, which was the next town. As soon as I saw him I decided to have him for a husband. I had always felt that most men would be nuisances as husbands, but Mr. Bilcher was a small man, and the sort you would call meek and humble, and I could not see that he would be much of a bother. He was a janitor by trade, and came to Riverbank to work in the Riverbank National Bank, so he would not be hanging around the house all day.

Right from the first he took my word for things, and did what I told him when I told him to do it. He helped me wash the dishes, and was helpful in pulling out basting threads when I brought work home, or in drawing threads for something I had to hemstitch, and otherwise all he wanted was to be let sit and read the newspaper. He was always eager to be helpful. If I said "Henry!" he would instantly jump

out of his chair and come to me, pulling at his beard and holding his spectacles in his other hand.

"Yes, Mary?" he would ask, and whatever I told him to do he would do, whether it was sprinkling the clothes or carrying out the garbage.

He often told me how much he admired me. He said that he had always preferred large, strong-looking women, and that I was larger and stronger looking than any woman he had ever expected to marry. Even when I used his razor to shave the few stiff hairs that grow under my chin, he never complained. They tell me that is a test, for most men are very fussy about their razors.

With Mr. Bilcher's wages added to what I earned by sewing, my income was much better than it had been; so we moved into a little house, and for a year we were extremely happy. Then this worry of mine began.

About the beginning of October I noticed a change in Henry. He began to have a worn and anxious look, and to be listless and fall off in weight—and Henry could not afford to lose much weight, because he did not have much to lose. His rest did not seem to do him any good, and in the mornings he was peevish and fretful. In the evenings and on Sunday he was restless.

Then he began making those weekly trips to Derlingport that gave me so much worry.

The bank closed at noon on Saturday, and Henry would take the two o'clock train for Derlingport that afternoon, not coming back until Monday morning, when he went right to the bank. I did not see him from Saturday morning until Monday night, un-

less I passed the bank on Monday morning on my way to some house where I had sewing to do.

At the beginning I thought nothing of it. Henry told me that the president of the Riverbank National Bank was interested in the First National Bank at Derlingport; that the janitor there was an old man, and feeble; that they did not like to discharge him, because he was a faithful employee, and that they had offered Henry twenty dollars a month to go to Derlingport and give the bank a good cleaning once a week. Of course I was glad to have that extra money. The eighty dollars Henry earned in Riverbank was nice, but twenty dollars more made it that much nicer.

The first thing that made me have any suspicions was that Henry always came back from Derlingport much brighter and cheerier than he was when he left home on Saturday morning. That did not seem natural. Then, when this thing had been going on from November till February, I had an idea. Certainly Henry did not work all Saturday afternoon and all Sunday and Sunday night; and, if he did not work Sunday night, he could very well come back from Derlingport on the train that reached Riverbank a few minutes after eleven o'clock.

"Henry Bilcher," I said to him rather severely, "I want the truth. What do you do when you go to Derlingport?"

"I work," he said, but he turned as red as a beet. "I clean the bank."

"Saturday night and Sunday night?" I asked him. "Henry, is there a woman in this?"

"No, ma'am," he said, but I could see that he was flustered. "This is a queer account of this ship that ran into a whale," he said. "I'll read it to you."

"I don't care to hear about any whales, nor about any ships that run into them," I said sternly. "All I want to say is that if some people I know are up to any tricks, they'll be sorry for it!"

"It was an eighty-foot whale," Henry said feebly, and he hid behind his newspaper.

I did, I think, what any wife would have done under the circumstances. I had married Henry Bilcher with the full intention that he was to be my husband and nothing else. It aroused my anger to think he might be going up to Derlingport to see some female whom he might have known

before he came to Riverbank. I went down to the Riverbank National and went right in to see the cashier. I chose an hour when I knew Henry would be cleaning windows on the upper floors.

"Good morning, Mrs. Bilcher," the cashier said. "Do you wish to see Henry?"

"No," I said, "I don't. I see enough of Henry Bilcher at home, and it isn't necessary for me to come to this bank to see him. If I did want to see him, I would see him, and I would not come to see you. What I want to say to you, Mr. Case, is that I think it's a sin and a shame that you pay my husband the miserable wages you pay him."

"Now, my dear lady," he said, "you should not say that. We are paying Henry twenty dollars more than we ever paid a janitor before. We never paid more than eighty dollars, and in November we raised his wages to one hundred dollars a month."

"For what?" I asked him.

"For doing his work here very satisfactorily indeed," the cashier said.

"What about Derlingport?" I asked him.

"Derlingport?" Mr. Case said, seeming surprised. "Nothing about Derlingport, as far as I know. Henry said he was paid eighty dollars a month there, and we paid him the same. That ended Derlingport as far as we were concerned. We have nothing to do with Derlingport whatever."

"Isn't your president interested in the bank in Derlingport?" I asked.

"Not in any way, shape or manner," Mr. Case replied. "If you are thinking of having Henry go back there to work, I advise you not to do it. He is doing very well here. His wages will be advanced as rapidly as we can manage it. Is that satisfactory?"

"It's what I wanted to know," I told him.

## II

It was just after this that I saw the advertisement of the detective school.

When I received the twelve lessons, I saw it was no task at all for a woman with good brains to learn to be a detective. Even a child could have learned those lessons. In less than a week I filled out the examination papers and sent them in, and in three days I received from the school my diploma, a star to wear when detecting, and a complete price list of mustaches,



beards, wigs, handcuffs, pistols, and so on. All I sent for was a box of make-up and some handcuffs. Disguise costumes I was sure I could make as well as anybody; but I did think that if I caught Henry at any of his tricks in Derlingport, I might need the handcuffs to bring him home.

On Saturday morning I was extra nice to Henry. He seemed tired and nervous when he got up, and I made some pancakes for him, and gave them to him with maple sirup.

"You look tired, Henry," I said. "Didn't you sleep well?"

"Sleep well?" he stammered. "Yes, yes, Mary—very well. I have no complaint to make—none at all."

"Nothing bothered you?"

"No, no, my dear! Not a thing," he said hastily.

"Not even your conscience, Henry Bilcher?" I asked, looking at him with a stern eye.

"Dear me, no!" he exclaimed. "Well, well! Just listen to what it says about this ship running into an iceberg! 'Through the dense fog—'"

"I am not interested in icebergs," I said coldly.

"No, of course not! Certainly not, my dear!" Henry said quickly. "These are nice cakes—very nice! Very little news in the paper this morning. 'Wife finds husband's love nest'—h-m! 'Detective secures evidence'—ha, ha! You're not interested in love nests and detectives, are you, dear? Not—"

"Not what?" I asked him, looking him firmly in the eye.

"Not interested," Henry said, turning a little pale, I thought. "Nice breakfast—very nice indeed. Well, my dear, I'm off for the day. Have the hard trip to Derlingport ahead of me to-day. I do dread it, but money is money, and every little helps. It's for your sake, Mary—for our sake."

"H-m!" I said. "Don't forget your rubbers."

As soon as Henry Bilcher was out of the house, I hurried the dishes into the sink and began my make-up for my trip to Derlingport. In the detective business the make-up is most important. The sixth lesson says most clearly that no professional detective ever forgets to put make-up back of the ears and rub it well up into the hair; also to put it on the eyelids, which can be

done by closing one eye at a time. This is what the lesson says:

A dangerous error is to forget to put the make-up on the back of the ears. A detective may deceive the most watchful criminal face to face, but if he omits the make-up back of the ears he is not perfect. He may find it necessary to turn around, and, upon seeing the backs of the ears not in harmony with the countenance, the criminal may become suspicious and flee.

From the "list of useful impersonations" I chose the one numbered fourteen—"negro mammy." For this I used the dark brown grease paint, rubbing it in well, making sure the backs of the ears and neck were covered, and then dusting it lightly with talcum to remove the gloss. The costume I had made while waiting for my diploma, and I put it on, took my suitcase, and caught the nine o'clock train for Derlingport.

It is a run of an hour, and I had a long wait for Henry, for he did not arrive until three o'clock. Again and again, as I sat in the station, men came up to me.

"Hello, auntie," they would say. "Are you looking for a j—"

Before they could say "job" they would stop and exclaim "My gosh!" or "Great Scott!" and, after looking at me awhile, would go away. For several hours I did not know why this was. Several times I went to the ladies' room and looked at my face in the mirror, but it seemed to be all right. I feared I had made my red mouth too big, so I made it smaller, and then larger again; but it was not until about two o'clock that I noticed that I had forgotten my legs.

I mean that I had neglected to change my flesh-colored stockings for black ones, or to brown my legs. This was because the detective lessons were written mostly for men, who wear trousers, and the writer had forgotten to mention legs. I went out at once and bought a pair of black stockings, and went to the ladies' room and put them on.

When I came out again, the young man in the ticket office came out and spoke to me.

"It's none of my business," he said, "but I want to know whether I ought to turn you over to the police or not. I've been watching you, and it looks as if there was something mighty queer about you. I never saw a negro the shade of brown you are. I've been watching your mouth,

and it changes—one time it's all over your face, and the next time it's a mere gash. And your legs were white a few minutes ago. If you want me to tell you what I think, I'll say I believe there's some crooked business about this somewhere. I'll say I believe you're as white as I am!"

"Young man," I replied severely, "your business is to sell tickets, and you had better go and sell them. If you want to know what I am, I can right soon tell you I'm a detective, and here's my diploma to prove it; and I'll say here and now, that detectives don't like to have folks nosing into their affairs."

He took my diploma and read it through.

"It says here 'Mrs. Henry Bilcher,'" he said. "Does that mean that you're the wife of a little man with a beard and spectacles who comes up here every Saturday on the three o'clock train?"

"Do you know him?" I asked.

"I should say I do know him!" replied the young man. "I've known Henry Bilcher ever since I was a kid knee-high. I knew him long before he went to Riverbank. He's a mighty nice little man. He stays at my boarding house when he's up here. Yes, I know Hen Bilcher well. How'd he come to marry a—but of course you're not a negro; anybody would know that. What's the big idea of the masquerade, anyway?"

"He's lying to me," I said, because I saw that I must make a friend of this young man immediately. Otherwise, as Henry's friend, he would tell Henry what he knew. "He says he comes up here to do janitor work in the First National Bank, and I know he don't."

"I know that, too," said the young man.

"He doesn't go out of his room at the boarding house from the minute he gets there until he has to catch the train for Riverbank on Monday morning. Mrs. Perkiss even takes his meals to him."

"Oh, she does, does she?" I exclaimed. "And who is this Mrs. Perkiss, may I inquire?"

"She runs the boarding house," the young man told me. "She's an old friend of Henry's. He used to board there before he went to Riverbank."

"Oh, he did, did he?" I exclaimed. "And I suppose she's a good-looking woman!"

"Good looking? She's a peach!" replied the young ticket seller. "She cer-

tainly is a hummer. You may know a better-looking woman than Mrs. Perkiss, but I don't. She's a queen, that's all!"

"And a widow," I said. I may have said it bitterly.

"Certainly she's a widow," said the young man. "Didn't her husband die about a year ago? That makes her a widow, doesn't it? Listen," he went on, as if the idea had just struck him. "You don't mean your husband is maybe flirting with her, do you?"

I did not say anything.

"Listen, lady," he said. "You oughtn't to wipe your eyes that way—you've gone and wiped all the brown off them. You look like a circus. But what do you know about Henry, the cute little shrimp? I never in the world would have thought that of Henry. The way he deceived me, too!"

"Deceived you?" I asked.

"Letting on he was the happiest man in the world," the young man said. "A dozen times this winter he has told me I ought to get married. 'George,' he says to me, 'you ought to get married. I've got a wonderful wife. You ought to see her—big, strong, a fine figure of a woman!' And all the time the little rascal was coming up here—well, well!"

"I'll fine figure him!" I said.

"Serve him right, too," the young man said. "Hold on now—all the brown is off one side of your nose. The miserable little rascal! Wait a minute—here comes the three o'clock; you can't let him see you this way. He would know you in a minute. Go somewhere—go in the ladies' room. No—come in my ticket office. I'll tell you what we'll do, after he goes."

I went into the ticket office, and he gave me a chair near the window, so that I could hear Henry, if he came to the window, but could not be seen.

Henry came. As soon as the train pulled in, he came to the window.

"Hello, George!" he said. "Here I am, back like a bad penny. How's everything?"

"Lovely," replied George. "How's Henry? How's the fine figure of a wife these days, Henry?"

"Just splendid!" Henry said. "Couldn't be better!"

"That's fine," George remarked. "I should think you'd hate to leave her. How can you tear yourself away from her over the week-end?"

"Business, George," my wretch of a husband said jauntily. "She understands. Hates to have me away, but she knows it has to be. Writing up account books for Mr. Possick—it gives me a nice little bit of extra money, George."

"Who is Possick?" George asked, giving me a gentle kick on the ankle. "I never heard of any one named Possick around here."

"You wouldn't, George," Henry began glibly enough. "He's a—the fact is—as a matter of fact—"

"He's a lady, isn't he?" George asked. "Come now, you old rascal, don't you try to fool me!"

"Why, George, how can you talk that way?" my wayward husband asked in a hurt sort of voice. "Mr. Prussick is a—"

"I thought you said his name was Possick," interrupted George, giving me another push with his foot to make sure I was listening. "Don't you know what his name is?"

"It's Possick—or Prussick," said Henry, and I knew just how that miserable little man was perspiring with fear, for I've seen him when I have spoken to him sharply. "Or Jones. He has a lot of names. He keeps changing them all the time. He's a—a detective. That's why you never heard of him, George. He has to be secret. That's why he wanted a man from out of town to write up his accounts."

"What makes you sweat like that?" George asked my straying mate. "I don't see anything to sweat about."

"You'd sweat if you—I mean, I shouldn't have told you this, George," my husband said. "Don't tell anybody, George—it's a secret. You see, George, Mr. Tussock writes such a poor hand that his clients can't read his writing. Well, I'd better go along now."

"I suppose you write his reports on a typewriter," George said. "I never saw a typewriter up there. I never heard a typewriter up there. Is it a noiseless typewriter?"

"I write it in longhand," my prevaricating husband said nervously. "Mr. Jussick wanted it in a neat longhand. That's why he hired me, George."

"Oh!" I exclaimed in spite of myself, for if ever there was a man who wrote a terrible hand it is Henry Bilcher.

"What did you say, George?" my husband asked.

"You'd better run along," George said. "Mr. Jissick-Possick-Josseck might get mad at you, if you keep him waiting. Give him a nice kiss for me, won't you?"

"I never kissed him in my life," said my erring husband.

Then he yawned, said he guessed he had better be going, and he went.

### III

FOR a few minutes the young man named George was busy with one thing and another in his ticket business, and then he came to me again.

"What do you think of that?" he asked me.

"I never heard such a pack of lies in my life," I told him.

"It wouldn't fool an infant mosquito," the ticket seller agreed. "I'm ashamed to call such a man a fellow human being. Mrs. Bilcher, I'm going to help you just as much as I can. What you want to do is to get into the boarding house, is it?"

"That's what I'm going to do," I said. "I'm going to go in upon Henry Bilcher in the midst of his sinful amours if I have to tear the boarding house doors down!"

"You won't have to do that," said George. "If you'll wait until I'm off duty, I can let you in at the front door. Any one would let you in if you weren't rigged up like—my, you do look terrible!"

"It's a disguise," I told him. "I want to be hired in the kitchen of the boarding house, so I can get the facts on Henry."

"That wouldn't be any trouble if you didn't look like something a baby painted with a broom," he said. "I can call up Mrs. Perkiss and ask if she wants a kitchen girl. If she doesn't want one, it will be the first time in her life. She always wants one, and sometimes she wants two; but for goodness' sake go and wash that brown mess off your face. It looks like a disease. If anybody sees you looking that way, they'll put you in a hospital—in a contagious diseases hospital, or an asylum. Go wash it off!"

I went to the ladies' room, and washed my face and hands as well as I could. When I returned, George looked me over, up and down.

"That's better," he said; "but you still look pretty awful. I don't believe anybody in the world has seen any such 'down in the cornfield' negro mammy clothes since Abraham Lincoln was a boy, except in

'Uncle Tom's Cabin' shows. By jiggers, that's it!"

"What's it?" I asked him.

"You're an 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' show," he said excitedly. "You're *Uncle Tom's* wife, if he had a wife, but it doesn't matter whether he had or not. In the show you were in he had one, and you were it. Then the show busted, and you are walking home to Chicago—see?—and you asked me where you could get a job for a few days. Wait till I telephone Mrs. Perkiss."

So that was all fixed. He telephoned Mrs. Perkiss and told her he had a big, strong woman down at the station—"strong as a horse, by her looks," was what he said—and Mrs. Perkiss said she would be glad to give me a job for a few days, or for a few weeks, or forever.

"She looks like ballyhack," George told her. "You'll think she's a rummage sale or something the cat brought in; but don't mind that. She had her clothes nabbed by the sheriff, and had to wear her stage costume. On the stage she was the lunatic wife of *Uncle Tom*, and had to dress accordingly, but you'll get used to her looks in a few days. The colors may fade. I'll send her right up in a cab."

When I reached the house, the cook—she was Irish—was at the gate with a rubber coat to put over me to hide my clothes. She hurried me around to the back door.

"For the love of Mike!" she said, when she saw my disguise garments. "Ain't it a sin and a shame what the theayters makes folks wear? Are ye cold?"

"My feet are cold," I said.

"Put them in the oven," Maggie said. "And you walking from thither to Chicago—did ye ever hear the like? Well, it's fine big feet you have for it, I'll say that for ye. It's fine ye're so strong built, ma'am, for the work in a boarding house needs a horse. Not but what Mrs. Perkiss is a grand lady to work for, mind you, but boarding houses is the devil and all for work. Are ye a naygur, ma'am?"

"No," I told her.

"Yer face is sort of brownish," she told me.

Before the cook could say any more, Mrs. Perkiss came into the kitchen. She looked at me.

"Maggie will tell you what there is to do," she said.

I looked her over carefully as she talked. She was, indeed, as George had said, a

beautiful woman, if you like her sort—showy.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Sally," I said. "Sally Smith."

"You will have a good home with me, Sally," she said, "if you like the place. Perhaps you can wear some of Maggie's clothes until you get others, but don't buy anything very heavy. I'm going to give up this house soon and go to Florida. A gentleman I am going to marry wants to go to Florida, and I am going to have a boarding house there. I hope it can be arranged before spring."

"Yes, ma'am," I said.

When she had talked about my wages, she went out.

"And there's a fine lady for ye!" cried Maggie admiringly. "Ain't she taking all of us to Floridy with her? I'm hoping the gentleman gets his divorce soon, so she can marry him and get us all down where it's fine and warm."

"Divorce!" I exclaimed. "Has the man she's going to marry got a wife?"

"Just now, yes," Maggie said; "but it won't be for long. It was a mistake, him marrying her, they tell me. There'll be a divorce—yes!"

"What's his name?" I asked, almost choking.

"It's—sure, his name has gone from me," replied Maggie. "A fine man he is, too—not so big and all, but a gentleman, ma'am."

Maggie had been working while she talked, cooking an omelet. Now she got a tray ready, put a doily on it, and set it with silver and a cup and saucer. Then she placed a teapot on it, with the omelet on a plate, and bread and butter.

"My room's on the top floor—at the back, on the left-hand side," she told me. "When ye go up, ye can try on the blue gingham dress in the closet. It may fit ye well enough. Ye can take up this tray to the gentleman in the hall room, and leave it at his door, but don't knock, for he'll be sleeping."

I took my feet from the oven and picked up the tray. As I was leaving the kitchen, Mrs. Perkiss came in again.

"You're letting Sally take up Mr. Bilcher's tray?" she asked. "Did you tell her not to knock?"

"I sure did, ma'am," Maggie said.

"You're not to waken the poor man," Mrs. Perkiss went on, and laughed. "He's



rather a nuisance, but I feel sorry for him, and I let him have the hall bedroom. He's only here from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning, Sally, but we try to keep as quiet on that floor as we can."

"So the poor little shrimp of a man can get his week's sleep," added Maggie. "What 'll he do when we go to Floridy, ma'am?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Perkiss. "No doubt he can find some other place next winter. It's his wife drives him away, poor little man," she explained. "He won't say a word against her—I'm sure I never knew a man as much in love as he is—but she must be a terrible woman!"

"One of them big, bulldozing females, belike," said Maggie, "that scares the wits out of their mites of husbands."

"Yes, so that he's afraid to say a word," said Mrs. Perkiss. "Just keeps silent and suffers."

"Suffers?" I cried.

"From her feet," said Mrs. Perkiss. "As I understand it, she has huge feet, and they are as cold as ice; and as soon as she gets into bed she turns her back and plants those big, cold feet in the middle of her husband's back. The poor little man just lies there and shivers with cold all night long, and doesn't dare to say a word.

He was being driven almost crazy from lack of sleep."

"Working all day and shivering all night with two big hunks of ice on his back," said Maggie. "No wonder he comes where he can make up his sleep for a day and two nights!"

I put the tray on the table. I thought of poor Henry, suffering for nights and nights from my cold feet, and how selfish I had been, and how patient and uncomplaining he had been. I dropped into a chair and covered my face with my hands and wept.

"My dear woman!" cried Mrs. Perkiss. "What is the matter?"

I thought quickly, as I had to think if I didn't want Henry to hear of my unjust suspicions.

"Oh, ma'am," I said, "I can't work here. I can't bear to think of one who was on the stage falling so low as to be second girl in a boarding house kitchen. Thank you, ma'am, but I must go."

"For the love of Mike!" Maggie exclaimed, as I pulled on my hat and picked up my suitcase. "Can you beat that?"

"And she was so strong—a regular horse," I heard Mrs. Perkiss say as I went out of the door, but I did not care.

Henry was faithful!

### A DAY IN SPRING

How light the wind ran through the grass—  
As still as birds that wheel and pass;  
And all the heart of spring lay fair  
As Danaë to the waiting air.

The path wound down beneath fruit trees  
All white in bridal fineries;  
The threads of sunlight shining through  
Like gold embroideries on blue.

Oblivious of tree and sky,  
Of wind that lightly passed us by,  
We went—we were too sad to see  
The day's entrancing pageantry.

We had no heart for mysteries  
Of spring. Love seemed a cruel thing,  
When startled from its ecstasies,  
And life was full of suffering.

How strange, that grief has vanished quite!  
Only the spring wind running light  
Along the grasses I recall—  
The winding path beneath the trees,  
Sunlight and blue above it all.

*Thalun Eames*

# Those Slim Blondes

A STORY WHICH THROWS AN INTERESTING LIGHT UPON THE QUESTION, WHAT REALLY CONSTITUTES A GOOD TIME?

By May Stanley

PICKING up a goblet from the dinner table, John Hammond stared at it suspiciously. It was a perfectly good goblet, amber tinted and gracious of line, yet Hammond frowned as he turned to his wife.

"These new, Anne?"

"Yes."

"Expensive?"

"I think not."

There was an odd quality in Anne Hammond's voice to-night. Usually, when her husband discussed money, Anne was quick to explain that she hadn't been spending very much, but now her words were brief and crisp. She did not look up from the dishes that she had begun to clear away.

John glanced at her in surprise.

"What *did* they cost?"

"Wait until I've finished the dishes," Anne said, and went out to the kitchen.

Settled in his comfortable chair, with the evening paper at hand, and the reading light at just the right angle, John's glance went round the pleasant living room approvingly, until it rested on the Chinese rug. Then he frowned. The purchase of that rug was still a sore spot in John Hammond's memory. It was the one thing on which Anne had refused to economize, in open defiance of thrift, common sense, and her husband.

John shook his head. Anne never *could* see the woods for the trees. He had explained the whole principle of the thing carefully, and had shown her how much better it would be to own a sound, interest-drawing bond than a silly rug. Anne hadn't argued, but had just shaken her head.

"Not for me," was the only answer she would give.

Of course the rug was beautiful — no question about that — and Anne adored

beautiful things; but she should have waited.

Anne came in, took her place on the other side of the reading lamp, and picked up her sewing. The sight of her brought John's mind back to the goblets.

"Did you buy those new goblets today, Anne?"

"No."

John waited a few moments and then asked, with obvious patience:

"Do you mind telling me what they cost?"

"I don't know what they cost."

John turned to stare at her.

"Do you mean to say that you just buy and charge things without so much as finding out the price? Good Heavens, Anne! I think sometimes that you don't know the meaning of money."

"I ought to," Anne returned quietly.

"I hear enough about it."

"And you're likely to hear more if business doesn't pick up. I never saw—"

"Did you get the Marvel Motors account?"

"We did not. It's all the old man's fault. I had them sewed up, all ready to sign, and then he stuck out for a bigger percentage than they'd stand for, confound him! Oh, say"—John brightened at a sudden thought—"he's got a new secretary."

"Who has?"

"The old man—Mr. Kirby. Weren't you listening?"

"Ye-es. Is she pretty?"

"Pretty isn't the word. She's a perfect beauty! Russian or something. You know—one of those slim blondes."

"Yes, I know," Anne said wearily, her eyes lifting to the mirror.

Anne wasn't a blonde, and she wasn't

beautiful—not plain, exactly, but—well, she had been pretty when she and John were married six years ago. Six years!

"Some queen, if you ask me," John went on cheerfully.

"Dresses well, I suppose?"

"Yes, I guess so. They all do."

Again Anne's eyes traveled to the mirror. Mentally she was ranging herself beside the girls in John's office—pretty girls, smartly dressed, beautifully bobbed or waved. Anne's face was still flushed from the heat of the kitchen, and her hands were red from too much housework. She had curled her hair that afternoon, but the steam of cooking had spoiled it.

She glanced down at her dress—last summer's printed silk, faded by many washings until the original orchid color was now a discouraged white. Well, you couldn't wear anything but wash dresses to do kitchen work. Anyway, she hadn't much choice. Kitchen work! How she hated—

John was speaking:

"How about those goblets? It seems to me you're darned mysterious about them."

"Has it ever occurred to you," his wife said coolly, "that I may not care for a quarrel every time there's anything new?"

"Now that's a dirty dig! I'm not quarreling. I'm just asking you. When it costs as much as it does to run this house, I should think you'd go easy on things that aren't necessary, and—oh, for the love of Pete! What's the use of *crying* about it?"

"I'm not crying," Anne said in a choked voice. "I'm laughing. I'm laughing at you!" She lifted her face from her hands. "You—you're *funny*!"

"Sorry," John said stiffly, "but I don't see the joke. Do you mind telling me what it is?"

"Aunt Helen sent me those goblets. They came to-day, prepaid."

"Well, why couldn't you say so in the first place? Nice of Aunt Helen, I must say."

"Yes, wasn't it? Especially prepaying them."

"See here, Anne," her husband retorted, "I don't like that. You talk as if I didn't give you a cent—"

"Well, do you?"

"Yes, I do," he returned hotly. "I give you everything I can afford. You know that I took out ten thousand life insurance for you when we were married. I'm buy-

ing this house, and trying to pick up a good bond whenever I can, and—"

"And I," Anne cut in swiftly, "don't want any of those things! If I had to work in an office again, I could do it. This isn't the kind of house I want, and you knew it. You just bought it because it was a *bargain*!"

She flung out the last word defiantly.

"Yes, and it is a bargain!" said John. "We can double our money on it whenever we want to sell."

"What if we can? Do you suppose anything we get for it will pay me for living six years in a house I detest? And if we do sell it you'll just take the money and use it for another good bargain!"

"Now, see here, Anne—" John began, but she went swiftly on:

"I'd give those bonds you've pinched and saved for, I'd give everything we have, for one pretty evening dress and a party—dinner and the theater and a dance some place where there's light and color and—"

"If you wanted to spend your life chasing around restaurants and night clubs, you should have married some one else," John said hotly.

"That isn't what I want, and you know it; but I don't want to stop living just because I'm married to you."

John rose and came around the table. Something in Anne's face made him stop short and thrust his hands into his pockets, instead of picking her up to sit on his knee—as he had intended.

"See here, Anne," he said soberly, "let's not quarrel. Let's just talk this thing out. Now, the way I see it—"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, *don't*!" Anne said desperately. "I heard all that you have to say about economy and saving four years ago, when I bought this rug!" One angry foot kicked the innocent cause of discord. "I know all about how we're to save *now*, and pinch and scrimp and deny ourselves *now*, so that when we're old and gray-headed, and can't live, or feel, or enjoy anything—*then* we'll have plenty of money!"

Again John tried to speak, but his wife's torrent of words flowed on.

"Suppose you do feel like saving money, that's no reason for utterly ignoring what I want to do. Why aren't you willing to give my way a trial for a little while? Why can't we play now and then? If you'd sell this house and spend a winter in town, I'd

be ready to economize after that—honestly I would!"

Her voice trembled and stopped. John Hammond was silent for a few moments, then he said in a grave tone:

"I'm sorry you feel as you do, Anne, and if I could afford to do the things you want, I'd be glad to do them; but I've seen too many young couples eating up every cent they make. It's the modern way, but"—unconsciously John's lips drew into a thin line, and three generations of New England ancestors spoke through them—"I don't believe in it. The money we waste now will not be working for us when we're fifty. If you could only be a little more patient—"

"If you don't mind, John, let's not talk any more," Anne said in an odd voice. "It's no use. Can't you see it's no use? I—I think I'll go to bed."

## II

ONCE inside the door of their bedroom, which Anne had contrived to make bright and cheerful in spite of gloomy wall paper and inadequate lighting, she had a swift impulse to run back, to talk with John again, to try to make him see what he was doing to her. Suppose she were to show him Aunt Helen's check and tell him what she had been half planning to do with it unless he—

She paused with her hand on the latch. What good would it do? John would just insist on buying her a bond with Aunt Helen's gift. He had his plan of life, and he would follow it.

Anne sat down at her small dressing table and began to take the pins from her hair. Then she dropped her hands and sat staring thoughtfully at her mirrored face. It wasn't a bad-looking face, but what would it be like at fifty? That would be twenty-two years from now. They streamed before her mind like a gray banner—twenty-two years of dull routine, housework, marketing, trimming down expenses, counting pennies! She could see herself growing old, more and more resentful, more bitter, or—and that would be worst of all—resigned.

Meanwhile John would go calmly on, saving money, buying shrewdly, selling at a profit. He would be successful, of course. He would grow thin-lipped, bulky, with hard lines about his eyes. He would come home to tell her of the bonds he had

bought, of what he had said at the stockholders' meeting, of his new secretary, "one of those slim blondes." He would be satisfied with the narrow world he had made for himself, and would never dream that life, the big adventure of living, had passed him by!

Anne got to her feet, still staring at the face in the mirror, now set in resolute lines.

"I'll never do it," she whispered. "I can't! And if I've got to go, I'll go—tomorrow!"

## III

"WELL, naturally," was Aunt Helen's comment, when Anne had finished her story.

Anne looked a trifle blank.

"Naturally?" she repeated.

"I mean," Aunt Helen explained, "that you've let John go ahead and do just as he wished, and of course you couldn't stand the result."

"But what could I do?" Anne's hands went out in a little gesture of desperation. "I talked with John. I tried to make him see—"

"Men don't see things," her aunt replied, "and there's no good in talking to them. Tell me, weren't you *ever* extravagant?"

"Just once. I bought a Chinese rug for the living room—quite a nice one."

Aunt Helen nodded approval.

"And then?"

"Why, John was so upset about it that I—I economized as much as I could to make up for it."

"When I get time," the older woman said thoughtfully, "I shall start a school for the elimination of ancient superstitions about men. Haven't you learned that they mustn't be taken seriously, especially when they have a tendency to be upset over trifles?"

"But John—"

"I suppose you are going to tell me that John is different from other men. My dear child, all men are alike except in their golf scores. Did you ever try to make John believe that the rug was *his* idea?"

"But it wasn't."

"What has that to do with it, pray tell me? Really, Anne, you don't seem to realize that a wife can make her husband believe or do what she wishes. It's all a question of method. Think of history! Look at Alexander," Aunt Helen de-



claimed, as if exhibiting that able warrior. "Would he have gone out conquering if he hadn't been sent? Certainly not! When his wife wanted a few more kingdoms, did Alexander tell her to get along with the kingdoms she had? No, indeed! He'd been too well trained. He went out and got them for her."

"Yes," Anne agreed drearily.

"And the only sane course for you to follow is to go back home at once and begin remodeling John. Make him over as you wish—only don't let him suspect it."

Anne shook her head.

"I'm sorry, but I can't do that. I've tried for six years to make some sort of life that I could stand, but I'm not a managing sort of person, and—it's just no use, Aunt Helen. John and I don't want the same things from life—that's all."

There was silence for a few moments.

"Well, it's your marriage, of course," Aunt Helen finally conceded with a sigh. "You have a right to do what you like with it; but I do *not* think you are acting wisely."

"Perhaps not," Anne said doggedly; "but I've heard too much wisdom and reason. Now I'm going to work, to earn my own money and spend it as I please. I intend"—Anne's voice trembled, but she steadied it defiantly—"to be happy!"

"Then you'll have to buy a new hat," her aunt retorted. "No sane woman could be happy in that one. Got any money?"

"Yes, the money you sent me."

"Not enough to go very far. What are you planning to do?"

Anne's face brightened a little.

"I'm to have my old job back. I stopped in there to-day, before coming over to see you. There's a vacancy, and I'm to begin on Monday."

"I see!"

Aunt Helen pondered this information for a few moments. Then, as if making up her mind to some definite course, she went to her desk and began to write swiftly.

"Here!" she said. "This will buy you a new dress. Better throw away that one. By the way, do you dance?"

"I used to."

"Then you'll need some lessons. Your cousin, Kitty Hilliard, can tell you where to go. Did you know that she's living in New York?"

"No, I hadn't heard."

"They only went there last month. This is their address. Kitty and Bob are dears, and quite devoid of common sense. You'll like them, and if they like you—and I'm sure they will—they'll take you dancing and to all sorts of places. It may even be that they have an extra room, and you could stop with them. I'm sure it would be amusing. I'll write Kitty. Sorry I'm going South so soon—but you'll manage."

"Oh, yes," Anne agreed. "I'll manage!"

She was not so sure of it, however, two days later, domiciled in the bleak fastnesses of a woman's hotel. What was John doing? Had he tried to find her? Perhaps he would see things in a different light now that she had gone.

She rose resolutely, picked up her new dress, and held its soft folds of jade green against her face as she stood before the mirror. Just take off that collar and put on her Carrickmacross lace—

The shrill whir of the telephone made her start violently, and the dress slipped to the floor. Perhaps that was John now! How had he found her? Aunt Helen, of course!

The bell shrilled again, and Anne picked up the receiver.

"Hello!" she said in a very small, shaky voice.

"Hello! That you, Anne? This is Kitty—Kitty Hilliard. Aunt Helen wired me about you. What on earth are you doing down in that emasculated hencoop? Yes, I know, but why go in mourning about it? Can you come up for tea this afternoon? Fine! Some visiting firemen in town that Bob's bringing along. Yes, any time. Good-by!"

Not John, after all! Slowly Anne put down the telephone, crossed the room, and began to change into the new dress.

Tea at Kitty's apartment proved to be a heady mixture of cocktails, cigarettes, and radio jazz, and the visiting firemen a group of Bob's college friends in town for the week-end. Anne discovered, to her surprise, that Black Bottom, with Pug Lawrence for instructor, is not a difficult dance, if essayed in the right mood.

Later, much later, it was decided to go somewhere for dinner, and a sketchy but becoming evening frock was improvised for Anne from one of Kitty's necklaces and the Chinese shawl which, in normal times,

draped one end of the piano. After dinner the crowd, augmented now by several other couples, went somewhere else to dance, and later to several other places, finally arriving at a studio down town, where a sleepy girl in blue pyjamas welcomed them joyfully, telling them that she was dying of thirst, and that there were bacon and eggs in the ice box if any one wanted breakfast.

Alighting from an automobile in front of the Hilliards' apartment house, Anne was surprised to realize that daylight had come already, and that Kitty was saying:

"Of course you'll stay, Anne. We've an extra bed. Good-by, every one—see you this afternoon!"

#### IV

SOME time in the early afternoon of that day Kitty, in a startling negligee of orange and black, drew a bridge table up before the open fire and produced grapefruit and coffee. Bob appeared, registering gloom, and asked Anne how she felt.

"I'm wonderful!" Anne announced. "It was a gorgeous party, and you're two dears to give me such a good time!"

"Good Lord!" Bob groaned. "If you call that a good time, wait until the gang comes down for Christmas!"

He lit a cigarette and asked Kitty what she'd done with the newspapers.

"Haven't seen them, darling. Probably that mean old paper man didn't send them. You'll have to stop in some day and pay him something."

"Yeah," Bob said. "Make another joke!"

He betook himself to the telephone. A short and very crisp conversation resulted in the appearance of the elevator man.

"Paper man say he got to have the money," he announced cheerfully. "Yeah, I tol' him they was fo' you, but he say—"

Bob dug in his pockets, found a fugitive half dollar, bestowed it, and said:

"Now go and get them!"

"Come along, Bobby dear," suggested Kitty. "You'll feel badly if you don't eat something."

"I'll feel badly no matter what I do," Bobby darkly predicted, and subsided into a chair.

Kitty turned to Anne.

"Aunt Helen said you might care to stop with us. Would you?"

"I'd love it!" Anne replied promptly. "If you're sure—"

"Oh, we'll be glad to have you, if you can stand our sketchy ways," Kitty said carelessly. "So that's all right!"

"And about—expenses," Anne said hesitatingly. "What shall I—"

"Oh, *that's* all right!"

"No," Anne said firmly. "I can't do it unless you let me pay my share of everything."

"Well, if you want to, how about one-third? Of course, we have the apartment anyway, so you mustn't come in on that; but if you want to share on other things, you'll probably save our lives."

"Of course. It's awfully good of you, Kitty!"

"Perhaps you'd better go and fetch your belongings," Kitty said, glancing at the clock. "The crowd will begin dropping in before long. If you go now, you'll be back in time for tea."

Anne found it comparatively easy to pick up work again in the offices of the *Dry Goods Leader*, where stenographic fleetness was not so important as accuracy and a fair working knowledge of wholesale textiles. After a week's time—except for the dull little ache when she thought of John—Anne might never have been away. It was as if her six years of marriage were only a dream.

Once again she found herself happily busy, vitally interested in her work, in rumors of the fabrics to be favored by leading style creators, in vague hints of new fashions due to emerge from *ateliers* on both sides of the water. And if her work kept her mind fully occupied during the daylight hours, there was no let down when evening came. Kitty and Bob were the center of a group that obviously regarded sleep as an utter waste of time, and dispensed with it so far as possible.

Anne was glad of this. She didn't want any free time on her hands—time in which to think, to think about John. No word had come from him. Sometimes Anne wondered if he had really made no effort to find her, and decided that he had not. It would be John's way, of course—to let her go without a word, to let everything go that did not conform to his way of thinking, his manner of life.

Anne's cheeks flushed at the thought. She had been right in coming away, perfectly right! She wouldn't even *think* of him!

But there were thoughts which always brought with them a picture of John—thoughts about money, debts. Anne had a horror of debt, and the sums that Kitty and Bob owed seemed to her appalling. Apparently they had no such feeling. Kitty would say:

"Anne dear, I've simply *got* to pay the grocer something. Have you five dollars to spare? I'll give it to you when Bobby comes home to-night."

Sometimes she did, but more often she forgot all about it, or, if she did remember, hadn't the money. Anne would tell her not to bother, to pay it when she got around to it.

As the weeks passed, however, Anne couldn't avoid a rising feeling of panic. One ought to save something, no matter how small a sum. Suppose she were ill! But there seemed no way of saving. And of course she was having a wonderful time, so why worry? Perhaps in a week or two—

Coming in from work one evening, Anne heard Kitty saying:

"But you can't do it! I shan't allow you!"

"Sorry, lady, but we got orders," a man's voice insisted.

A dull thump, as of furniture being moved about.

"What is it?" said Anne, staring in wonder at a man who had lifted the big armchair and was carrying it toward the door. "What is it?" she repeated.

"Oh, Anne," Kitty sobbed, "they're taking away the furniture! They can't do it, can they? It's ours, even if it isn't all paid for! Tell him he can't—"

The words dissolved in tears. Anne turned to the man.

"Wait just a minute," she said, trying to calculate mentally how much money she could spare. No, she hadn't anything to spare, if she was to make that payment on her new coat. "How much money do you want?" she asked, nevertheless. "How much is owing?"

He took out a sheaf of papers and thumbed through them.

"Here it is—ten dollars a week, and they ain't paid anything for a month. They owe forty dollars."

"Here are fifteen dollars," said Anne. "Wait a minute," she went on, as the man shook his head. "We'll pay the other twenty-five to-morrow—before noon. Tell

your cashier the money will be there before noon."

"Oh, all right!" The man took the bills she held out and scrawled a receipt. "But it 'll have to come through reg'lar after this, see! It 'll save trouble."

When he had gone, Anne mechanically straightened out the rug, put the chairs back in their accustomed places, and then turned to Kitty, who wiped her eyes.

"I know it looks terrible, the way such things happen," she said contritely. "We're going to save for a home, some time; but we can't even think of it on the money Bobby's making now."

"No, I suppose not," Anne agreed.

"We couldn't just grub along and never have any good times. We couldn't stand it. Bobby knows that as well as I do. Oh, if you don't mind, Anne, let's not say anything to him about the furniture! It would only make him angry, and when Bobby's angry his inside goes all wrong."

"Yes, I know," said Anne, mentally telling herself that Bobby's inside needed regular food and more sleep.

"You see," Kitty explained, "I spent the furniture money on some back debts, and I'd rather Bobby didn't know."

"But he'll have to know," Anne insisted. "I promised the man that you'd pay the other twenty-five to-morrow morning. I haven't it, or—"

"Couldn't you get it, Anne—borrow it from your office, or something? I'll pay it back to you just as soon as I can."

"I suppose I might," Anne said slowly; "but I don't like to do it. I have some bills of my own that ought to be paid, too. I've been getting into debt frightfully these last few weeks."

"Oh, new bills don't matter!" Kitty said lightly. "It's the old ones that make all the bother. Shall we get ready for dinner now? Bobby 'll be along soon."

The next morning Anne got a hundred dollars advance on her month's salary, paid the furniture bill—realizing with a sinking heart that she would probably have it to do again next month—loaned Kitty thirty dollars toward the month's rent, and put off hope of paying her own bills until later. After the first of the year, she told herself, she would really begin saving.

## V

THE holidays brought Pug Lawrence back to town, together with a fresh ava-

lanche of Bobby's friends. Anne found herself getting to bed at three or four o'clock each morning, rising with tired eyes and throbbing head to dash for the office, get through the day's work somehow, and then dash home in time to dress for another hectic night.

Of course it was great fun, she told herself stoutly, refusing to admit that she was longing for a good night's rest, that she was finding Pug Lawrence stupid and the touch of his soft and rather clammy hands unbearable. It was great fun to dance every night, to be free of housework, to have one's own money to spend. She repeated the words as if they were a spell to ward off troublesome thoughts. Great fun!

The "crowd" went down town that evening to a costume dance, Anne as a dryad in leaf green, wearing a blond wig circled with green and silver.

"A wonderful dress for you, Anne," Kitty declared, "and the wig's simply perfect! You ought to have some gold tints put in your hair right away. You'd be stunning as a blonde."

A blonde! Anne smiled faintly at a sudden memory of John talking about some girl at the office—"one of those slim blondes." What would John say if he were here, what would he think?

"I certainly intend to be one in my next incarnation," Kitty said briskly. "A slim blonde with insufficient brains never has to worry about anything!"

The music blared, and Kitty was gone. Pug Lawrence claimed Anne, and swung her into the maze of circling figures.

"Lord, Anne, you look great to-night!" Pug breathed huskily. "Got all the other girls biting the furniture." He stopped abruptly and stared at a couple ahead of them. "Why, say, if that isn't old Skip! What d'you know? Hello, Skipper!"

The man called Skipper turned, and Anne saw that he was John.

John grinned back at Pug Lawrence, and then his eyes met Anne's and held them. The music ended with a wild crash. Pug and John were shaking hands. Pug was saying:

"Well, of all the luck! Where did you blow in from?" Without waiting for an answer, he added: "This is Anne. You'll like her—great girl!"

Anne heard John repeating the other girl's name, and had a swift picture of yel-

low hair, blue eyes, a scarlet gown that clung. The music began once more, and Pug swung away with the scarlet gown.

"Shall we dance?" John said quietly, and Anne was in his arms, trying frantically to think of something to say.

"I didn't know you danced," she began, and was sorry, for the words sounded like an accusation.

"Oh, I'm just learning," John replied cheerfully.

Silence.

"When did you know Pug Lawrence?" Anne asked desperately.

"In college. Nice chap!"

"Yes, awfully nice," Anne agreed.

The dance ended, and Pug came up with the girl in scarlet. John relinquished Anne, and he and the girl turned toward their table, her hand tucked possessively in John's arm. Anne shook with a sudden flood of anger. That girl! How dare he? Why, she was common, *common*! What could John possibly see—

"Anne, John's here!" Kitty gasped excitedly. "I just caught a glimpse of him."

"Oh, yes!" Anne tried to make her voice casual. "I've just been dancing with him." Then, turning to Pug: "John's my husband, you see," she explained, conscious of a queer, fierce thrill of pride in the words.

With a startled "My Lord!" Pug turned involuntarily to stare after John. Anne made for the shelter of the dressing room. She had had, she decided, about all she could stand for one night. Throwing her cloak about her, she slipped outside and into a taxi. Then, huddled in one corner, she gave way to stormy sobs.

## VI

SOME time toward early morning, waking from a troubled sleep, Anne heard the telephone ring.

"Anne!" Kitty's voice said excitedly. "Have you seen Bobby? Is he there?"

"Bobby? No—wait a moment. I'll make sure."

Crossing the living room swiftly, she rapped at the door of Kitty's and Bob's room. No answer! Pushing open the door, she switched on the light and glanced about. No one there!

Back at the telephone, Anne said:

"He isn't here. Where are you, Kitty? What has happened?"

"We can't find Bobby," wailed Kitty.



"I know something terrible has happened to him!"

"Is Pug there?"

"Yes. Are you *sure*, Anne?"

"No, Bobby isn't here. Let me talk with Pug, will you? Don't be frightened, Kitty. Bobby's all right, I'm certain." To Pug she said: "Bring Kitty home right away, will you? Then we'll see what to do next."

Anne slipped into a dress and smoothed her hair, while her mind raced around the astonishing question, what could have happened to Bobby? She felt cold and a little frightened. Of course, nothing could have happened!

She wished passionately that John were here, then put the thought from her, and hurried to open the door for Kitty and Pug.

"Anne, we've telephoned everywhere," Kitty sobbed. "No one has seen him. Oh, I know he's been killed!"

Anne put her arms about Kitty and drew her down on the couch, while Pug recounted what little there was to tell. Kitty had missed her husband when she was ready to come home, and had asked Pug to find him. Pug had searched all over the place, but Bobby was not there. Then they thought he might have gone for a little walk, as he had complained of a headache earlier in the evening. That hope ended, they had called every place they could think of where he might possibly have gone. Finally, before bringing Kitty home, Pug had notified the police and called the hospitals.

"I'll go now and wait at the police station," he said, giving Anne the number. "I'll call you when there's any news. You call me there if you hear anything."

"I'm going, too," Kitty said through chattering teeth.

"Oh, no, you must stay here, Kitty!" Anne cried. "Suppose Bobby comes and you aren't here!"

Kitty finally consented to stay, but fought off Anne's efforts to give her a sedative, to persuade her to lie down.

"I'll never sleep again till I hear from Bobby," she wailed. "Oh, Anne, I've been such a bad wife! Bobby was tired and ill, and I should have taken care of him, but I didn't! I didn't! Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?"

"You're going to lie down and rest," Anne said firmly. "Bobby's all right—

I'm sure of it, Kitty. Now, take this, and lie down for awhile."

Anne fetched hot water bottles and warm blankets, tucked Kitty up on the couch, and sat beside her, stroking Kitty's forehead and murmuring reassuring words that she herself was far from believing. Finally a faint color crept into Kitty's white lips, and the heavy lids fluttered down.

Anne sat silently waiting, while one thought whispered itself over and over—if John were here! If only John were here!

John would know what to do. He always knew what to do. He would find Bobby—somehow.

Half past five struck softly, and Anne turned desperately to the telephone. Suppose he were not there! Dismay clutched at her heart as she repeated the familiar number. Oh, he *must* be there, he must! And then John's voice came, sounding sleepy and a long way off:

"Hello!"

"John, this is Anne," she said in a very small voice.

There was a moment's silence, then:

"Yes! Did you want me?"

"Oh, John, *yes!*"

The story tumbled from Anne's lips in frantic haste. John wasted no time on questions.

"There's a train in ten minutes," he said. "I'll be there about half past six," and the receiver clicked.

Another eternity of time crept by, while Kitty slept fitfully and Anne sat by the telephone, white-faced, praying for it to bring news, fearing that it might. At length she rose and began to walk desperately up and down the room. She realized that she was shivering violently. Better go to the kitchen, she thought, and make some coffee. It would at least be something to do.

She pushed open the kitchen door—then gave a wild scream that brought Kitty to her side:

"Bobby!"

Robert Hilliard was sitting on the floor, with his head against the ice box, sleeping peacefully.

Kitty was on her knees by his side, crying, laughing, shaking him, saying:

"Bobby! Bobby! Are you all right? Bobby, wake up!"

He opened one eye.

"S all right," he said, and closed his eye again.

"Anne," Kitty said breathlessly, "go for a doctor! Call some one! He's ill!"

"Not," Bobby returned, this time opening both eyes. "Sleepy—came home. How do, home? Nice place. Don't see you often." He got to his feet, looking around with a slightly dazed expression. "Sleepy—came home," he repeated.

"Come to bed at once, Bobby," Kitty said firmly.

"Sure!" He permitted her to lead him from the kitchen, but paused majestically in the doorway. "Nice home," he proclaimed. "Nice wife—but no sleep."

"There will be after this," Kitty said with deep conviction. "Plenty of it!"

She led Bobby into the bedroom and closed the door.

Anne subsided limply into a chair and began to sob. She was crying hysterically when John came in.

"Bobby's here," she sobbed. "He's all right."

She made no protest when John gathered her into his arms, sat down, and held her close until the sobbing ceased. Finally she sat up and wiped her eyes.

"I'm sorry. I—I didn't mean to act like this. I think I must be tired."

"You need food," John said, "and coffee. Show me where it is, and I'll make you a cup."

Hot, steaming coffee brought a little color back into Anne's face. She smiled faintly.

"I'm sorry to have made you so much trouble," she said.

"No trouble at all. Been having a good time, Anne?"

She was silent for a few moments, then lifted her eyes bravely to his.

"No, John, I haven't. I can't have good times away from you."

Some time later Anne murmured:

"John, you don't really *like* that girl, do you?"

"What girl?" her husband asked blankly.

"Why, the one who was with you last night, of course."

"Oh, Carol—Mr. Kirby's secretary. Why, she's all right."

"But you don't really like her?"

"Lord, no! I don't care for blondes. Do you?"

"No," Anne said emphatically, "I don't."

"And now," John demanded, "what do you say to going away somewhere for a few days? I can get away from the office—not long enough to go South, I'm afraid, but we'll do that next winter."

"If you don't mind," Anne said thoughtfully, "I'd like to go out home instead of any other place."

"Home? You mean that?"

"Yes."

"All right—we'll have our vacation there; but afterward I want you to come to town and find a nice place for us to live this winter."

"You want to do that, John?"

"Yes." John grinned sheepishly. "I'm learning that it's a good thing to play a little."

### DO YOU RECALL?

Do you recall how once you came to me

Out of the night, one evening in the spring

When all the dark was filled with whispering

Of a new life? Leaves laughed from every tree

Along the riverside; then we were free,

Free as the wind, the wind that seemed to sing

About the door and make the old house ring

With gladness, *echoing our* gayety.

I can remember how I stood above

And listened for your step upon the stair.

You entered like a fragrant breath of air

To tarry for awhile; I let you go.

To-day I marvel that I did not know

That when you went you bore away my love!

*Elisabeth Scollard*

# Alias Bosco Bulge

THE FAMOUS PARMINTER, PLUMP SCION OF THE UPPER REALM,  
ENCOUNTERS A DASTARDLY WIT WHO ATTEMPTS A  
PRACTICAL JOKE AT AVIATION'S EXPENSE

By Richard Howells Watkins

THERE are persons utterly unworthy whose character it takes me some time to probe. There are others whom I have no difficulty in disliking at first glance. Such a one is Mortimer Baltsby.

It was he who spread that base canard about my fondness for horses, evinced, so he alleged, by the fact that I gave up polo after the third pony had crumpled under the weight of my adipose tissue.

As a matter of fact, I am not fat, though I am built upon more generous proportions than the reedy Mortimer. And as for the ponies, they were, like Mortimer, spineless animals, and grossly misrepresented to me when I purchased them.

But the truth has never bothered Mortimer, and moreover he has an undeserved reputation as a wit which makes him desperate and totally unscrupulous in his efforts to maintain it. For this reason it was that he followed the polo pony story with a rumor that I was buying a four-motored freight plane of sixteen hundred horse power for my personal use as a light flyabout. Such is his clumsy humor.

This story of course came just after my gallant, persevering, and successful efforts to become a pilot. Naturally the fellow, who spends his life on the back of a pony knocking a silly little ball about a field, was jealous of the widespread fame which came to me when, handicapped by the flimsiness of present-day aircraft and a series of unfortunate but unavoidable accidents, I eventually triumphed and became a renowned pilot.

It was natural that I should win fame in aviation, for a Parminter never fails to attain any dignified goal toward which he sets his face. Wealth, wisdom, eminence,

and a solid, impressive appearance—all these are naturally a Parminter's. And I am rather a remarkable Parminter, I may remark *en passant*.

As I was in the air, above his base attempts at humor, I could afford to smile at his detestable levity. I smiled even when he sent me a notice of a sale of brewery horses with a suggestion that I reënter polo.

Nevertheless he and I were destined to come to what is vulgarly termed a showdown, though I prefer to call it a confrontation.

This took place somewhat unexpectedly. I was engaged in a test flight in a new biplane I had recently added to my stable—or, rather, to my aviary.

Passing over the green expanse of the Nassau Polo Club, which is located on Hempstead Plains, it occurred to me that this was a good opportunity to display forcibly to the members what a dull thing polo really is, compared to the excitement of flying.

I therefore paused, and proceeded to run through a series of breath-taking and expertly executed stunts, or, as I prefer to say, an exhibition in aërobatics. My skill in these maneuvers is a matter of wonder among other pilots, but, owing to the fact that the machine was new to me, I did slide off the wing at the top of a loop, and dropped into an unexpected tail spin.

However, I recovered gracefully, after a fall of two or three thousand feet, and regained my altitude. As I was about to resume my exhibition, the motor failed completely. Again, most annoyingly, I found myself in a tail spin.

The green field rose very close to me this time; but, with my usual brilliance and

coolness, I managed to free myself from the bewildering evolution, and made a well-nigh perfect landing.

I say well-nigh perfect, because the plane alighted with tail slightly higher than is considered proper in textbooks on flying, and the machine nosed over, and finally stopped upon its back. However, although irritated by this unexpected maneuver, I was unhurt. My position, upside down in the cockpit, was an awkward one.

But I had been thus capsized before. Releasing my safety belt with the utmost *sang-froid*, I permitted myself to drop to the turf, protecting my head with my outstretched hands. I rolled over. I then crawled out from beneath the machine, and contemplated it with disapproval.

My unexpected descent had caused some stir among a few members who were engaged upon an impromptu chukker on the field. When they got their ponies under control they came galloping up to me.

At their head was this fellow Baltsby. He was in a vile temper, and waved his mallet threateningly.

"Next time you try to squash yourself, do it outside the field," he burst out resentfully.

I replied with a haughty stare. Then he recognized me. Leaping off his mount, he slapped his leg boisterously.

He turned to his companions, young hooligans of the wealthier sort, who are far more obnoxious to me than those of the lower classes, since one is supposed to mix with them. All were obviously in that condition which I have heard described by jesters as "spifficated."

"Well, well, well!" Baltsby bellowed. "If it isn't old Parmesan himself! 'Dropped down to dare the S. P. C. A. and crack up a few more ponies?'"

I walked up to the man with a quickened stride, disregarding the roar of applause this feeble wit brought forth.

"I will have you know, sir, that my name is Parminter—Mr. Elswood Parminter to you," I said sternly. "Only the exigencies of aviation have brought me near you."

I paused impressively; then went on with crushing disdain:

"Ordinarily, sir, I fly over you, the higher the better."

He drew a hip flask from his pocket and took a drink, looked at me, and took another drink.

"Thanks," he said. Apparently that was

all that he could think of, but his friends laughed raucously nevertheless.

The man is, as I may have mentioned, a long, thin sapling sort of person. In justice I must admit that he is a tolerably good polo player, using his lengthy body like a whip in slashing at the ball.

But I must add, also in justice, that he has a nasty, sneering expression which is habitual, a sickly mustache, small black eyes, and a small head.

But for that kind of head the smaller the better, I may say in my incisive and scintillant conversational style, which, unfortunately, I am rarely able to command before the conversation is over.

Mortimer took another drink. The man is more at home with his nose inside a glass than with his knees gripping a pony, which is saying much. Then he spoke.

"Quite a high flyer, eh? Very much above the boys on the ground?"

A flash of repartee, infrequent, as I have confessed, came to me.

"I might be in the subway, if I ever employed that despicable means of travel, and you in the Woolworth Tower, sir, and I would still be above you, sir."

He wagged his head with an effort at being judicial. "Very poor, that—very! You should change your correspondence school. I know of a two-dollar course in humor that will give you better stuff than that."

I declined to bandy words with the man. But as I turned away he murmured loudly to his companions:

"What a figure! Think what a thump the poor old world would get if he did a real fall! The seismograph in Tokyo would throw a fit, and the price of store teeth would go up in Czechoslovakia."

I whirled upon him, fronting the vulgar mirth of his fellows most disdainfully. "Since you never go higher than the back of a pony, the world need not concern itself with your falls," I retorted, and my scorn was withering.

There was a murmur—a murmur of admiration, I dare say, from Mortimer Baltsby's fellows at this quick answer. They were not all as bad as he. Perhaps I had misjudged some of them.

"Wait a minute, Parmesan—Parminter," Mortimer said, manifestly upset. He drew nearer to me, and his nose twitched like an ill-humored rabbit. "Are you meaning to imply that I am afraid to go



up in an airplane because there's danger of a fall?"

"Implying? I am saying so," I replied, determined to trample upon his petty pretensions to courage before I left the club. "You would not dare to go up in a plane even with a parachute strapped to you."

"I've been up!" he replied triumphantly. "Flew across the Channel once. 'Polo Star Tries Cloud Punching,' a newspaper headline said. I have the clipping."

That rather took me aback. After all, the fellow was stupid enough to brave the air without realizing its perils.

At my silence he laughed exultantly, and made as if to pat me on the chest—rather low down. I drew back.

"Don't go 'way, Parmy," he taunted me. "I'm going to make a little proposition to you, now that you've brought up the subject of nerve. Suppose both of us try a fall—with parachutes, of course?"

He swung around to his fellows, and pointed a finger at me in a manner which I was taught was improper at a very early age.

"Wouldn't he look cute, boys, coming down under a parachute? You couldn't tell him from a balloon, until he splashed."

There was a ribald roar of laughter at this. The men were in a more advanced state of alcoholism than I had supposed. For some reason the picture Baltsby painted roused their risibles.

"Balloon!" one of them exclaimed, pointing at me. "Balloon! Balloon!" echoed the others.

I did not hesitate longer than an instant.

"I accept," I snapped. "I will willingly attempt a parachute competition if only for the pleasure of watching you balk at the crucial moment."

Mortimer stared at me, as if my firm decision had startled him into a state of sobriety.

"You? You do a chute jump!" he exclaimed. "Why, man, it would take a circus tent to slow you up, once you headed for the earth!"

"Nevertheless, I accept your challenge," I declared. "One condition I must make, and that is that I jump first. I could never follow you, under any circumstances."

"Attaboy! Attaballoon!" roared one of my enemy's friends encouragingly. I paid no attention. My eye, stern and steady, continued unwaveringly upon Mortimer.

"Come!" I commanded. "Elucidate

your proposition more fully. Set a time and place. Or must I brand you as a coward in your own haunt, among your own fellows?"

He burst out into laughter. "All ri'," he said, when he recovered from his pretended paroxysm of mirth. "We'll have a parachute party, Parmy. Only don't blame me if you go squish."

"Where? When?" I demanded inexorably.

"Here—on Saturday afternoon," Baltsby promptly replied.

"Done!" I pronounced solemnly.

"Where do we get the airplane and parachutes?"

"I will have my secretary arrange all that," I informed him.

"Nothing doing," he disagreed. "I want to know all about the plane and parachutes ahead of time."

"He will communicate with you, sir," I said, and bowing with dignity I strode through their ranks toward the clubhouse. Sometimes I wish my legs were a trifle longer, but I must conclude that my departure was impressive, for I heard no sound behind me.

## II

At the clubhouse my entrance was greeted, by those members who had not flocked out upon the field, with murmurs and stares. I paid no heed, however, for even before my own eminence as an aviator the name of Parminter was something to make people stare—respectfully, of course.

I have neglected to state that I had decided, with my unerring good judgment, that the cause of the motor failure was the fact that I had remained in the air too long, exhausting the gasoline supply.

Hurriedly, for I disliked the horsy atmosphere and conversation of the club, I telephoned for my man to bring my car. I also notified a truckman at the field, with whom I have a contract, of the whereabouts of the machine. He gives me very good service in the matter of transporting wrecked machines back to my private hangars, when I am so unfortunate as to have a crash.

That evening I gave my secretary, Carson, instructions to purchase two parachutes, and to arrange with Al Vanning, a commercial pilot I had met casually at Brundage Field, Mineola, to be available Saturday afternoon. I decided that I would

use one of my own machines for the exploit.

Vanning, however, impudently sent back word that he would like to see both the chute jumpers and the parachutes before he became "implicated," as he phrased it. Accordingly I had Carson notify Baltsby, and gave him Vanning's address. Next day, after an excellent light lunch, marred only by a slight rareness of the *filet mignon*, I set out in the Rolls to Mineola.

Mortimer Baltsby was already there when I arrived; indeed, he appeared to have been there in Vanning's hangar for some time. However, he broke off his earnest conversation with the pilot abruptly, and greeted me in accents of exaggerated surprise:

"You did come, after all! I was just trying to induce Mr. Vanning to bet that you hadn't skipped to Canada."

I rebuked him with a glance of supreme distaste, and beckoned Carson to my side.

"Tell this—Baltsby individual that I shall hereafter communicate with him through you."

"Yes, sir," said Carson, and repeated the message.

But this indication of my feeling toward Baltsby had no effect upon him. The man was utterly devoid of finer feelings. He said:

"Tell your boss, Carson, that hereafter I shall consider him as dumb as he pleases. And you might add that I have always held strong views on that subject myself, and am delighted to have my opinion so startlingly confirmed."

I presume this was one of his ill-advised attempts at levity, though I could make nothing of it. Certainly I have always been taciturn, but it has been the taciturnity of a strong, silent man. However, I have been known to speak my mind.

I halted Carson with upraised finger.

"You will repeat no nonsense to me whatsoever, Carson."

"Yes, sir," said Carson respectfully. "I will leave the nonsense to you, sir."

"Precisely," I said. It is indeed pleasant to have a servant of the understanding type like my secretary.

Vanning had been listening to all this with his usual mournful countenance. He is a pessimist, a confirmed pessimist, and bases his creed upon the fact that he has been in the business of aviation for more than ten years.

This, he maintains, is enough to curdle any disposition. With this, he is shockingly disrespectful to his betters. However, the man is an excellent pilot, and capable, to some degree, of comprehension.

"Come down to earth, so we can get up in the air," he broke in as I was about to address him. "Who wants to make a chute jump, and why is he tired of life?"

"I thought that perhaps—this gentleman"—I indicated Baltsby, realizing that my words might otherwise be misunderstood—"had told you about it."

Baltsby started to speak, but Vanning interrupted him in a loud voice:

"Him? No! He just got here. Hasn't been here three minutes. I don't know anything about this thing, except something vague that Carson spilled last night."

"The plan is this," I said, and at some length explained it to him.

"And the place is over the Nassau Polo Field, and the time is 3 P.M. Saturday," Mortimer Baltsby added. "I'm thinking of having a few friends there."

He chuckled, and gazed at Vanning. His right eye twitched. As his nose had twitched on the previous day, I judged the fellow suffered from that sort of nervous trouble, due to his execrable habits.

Vanning looked away from Baltsby, with a frown.

"All right," he said. "But remember, we mustn't spill anything by getting too gay before then."

"What does that mean?" I inquired, for his argot was at times unintelligible to me.

"Oh, Carson, tell Mr. Parminter that means we aren't either of us to make practice jumps before then," Baltsby interposed before Vanning could answer.

"That's it," agreed the pilot somewhat hastily. "You got me right, Mr. Baltsby."

"I got you right," Baltsby repeated.

I tapped my toe on the cement floor impatiently.

"Them chutes your secretary bought are all right, but I'm going to test and refold 'em right, before you put them on," Vanning said decisively. "I'm not having any one do a five-thousand-foot free dive with a bum chute from my plane, and land in somebody's lap. Too expensive for me."

"You may keep the parachute packs here," I conceded.

Baltsby chuckled.

"What's the joke?" demanded Vanning fiercely.

"Oh, nothing—nothing," the silly fellow replied. "I'm just thinking how easy it is—chute jumping, I mean."

"Better keep your trap shut if you want to catch flies," Vanning growled, and turned away from him. It seemed to me that he was developing quite a distaste for Baltsby. Well, of course any one would. It merely indicated the man's intelligence.

"Nother thing," he added. "We're using my passenger carrying ship. It's a three-seater—two in the rear cockpit, and pilot in front cockpit. At a pinch it'll carry three and a half. Let's see."

He drew back and surveyed me critically, as I thought.

"You're putting a lot of trust in one parachute," he said.

"Have done!" I commanded sharply. "I had thought of using one of my own machines—"

"I'll feel more at home in my own," Vanning said doggedly, and so I did not press the point. A big man knows when he may be lenient. So far, as I saw it, I had scored all the tricks. The mere matter of one ship or another was not worth arguing about.

Having settled the affair, I started away promptly with Carson.

"I'll send you one grand lump of maple sugar, Mr. Vanning," I heard Baltsby say, just prior to my departure beyond ear-shot.

"You'd better," said Vanning grimly. "On a job like this I require sweetening."

"That, Carson, indicates conclusively that Baltsby is already weakening," I said, with exultation, to Carson. "The fellow is trying to ingratiate himself with Vanning by presenting him with candy. As if Vanning could do anything to help him in that final moment when he must leap from the ship into thin air!"

Carson chuckled. Sometimes he chuckles without apparent reason. "One grand—lump of sugar," he murmured. "I like sugar, too."

I was disgusted by this puerile remark, and his silly giggle. It is because of these lapses into childishness that Carson is a mere secretary, I presume, while I—I say it with all due modesty—am a Parminter.

"I do not laugh without reason, Carson," I said.

"You may not have reason to laugh,

sir," Carson replied with another snigger. Idiotic thing to say, that.

### III

THE days dragged slowly until Saturday. Each passing hour enhanced my eagerness for the moment when I, in my dashing way, was to step from the plane out into space, without a quiver, leaving my shuddering, hesitating rival in the cockpit, to show, as I felt sure he would, the white feather—the yellow streak.

I felt confident he would not jump. If he did—well, it would be with palpable hesitation, and after my own reckless plunge it would be a mere anticlimax. Mine was the place of honor—first.

Saturday morning my fever of anticipation had risen to such a height that I awoke early. My watch showed me that it was only a quarter of eight, but even so, I left my bed.

It is my conviction that it is the morning air that is unhealthy, for I have tested the night air thoroughly, and I know that it has no harmful effects. But the morning air—the very feel of it is repulsive to me, and I rarely arise before nine.

Nevertheless, my eagerness this day would not be denied. I arose, as I say, at a quarter of eight.

Full of vigor, I bathed, shaved, and dressed without calling in my man. I felt I must do something to control my mounting enthusiasm, and I found dressing without assistance a cooling measure. Then, with a firm, emphatic footstep, I entered the morning room.

Carson, the lazy fellow, had not yet finished breakfast, and so absorbed was he in something that lay beside his plate that he did not notice me. I heard him titter.

"What's this, Carson?" I said, picking up the object of his interest. "Why are you dawdling this way when you should be opening my mail?"

I glanced at the piece of red cardboard he had been giggling over. It was some silly thing—an invitation to attend the death-defying exhibition of the mysterious Bosco Bulge, late of Jingle's menagerie, the world's heavyweight wing walker and aerial performer.

My attention was diverted from the notice by Carson. The man had gone rigid, a forkful of poached egg on toast poised in mid-air; his face deadly white; his eyes protruding, but immovably fixed upon me.

It was obvious that my rebuke concerning his dilatory tactics had gone home.

I dropped the flaring red announcement back on the table. After all, it would not do to have the man die of heart trouble or paralysis after my rebuke. I spoke more gently.

"Come, come, Carson, you must not take my words too much to heart. But you must have my mail opened early, you know, you really must. How are the eggs?"

"M-m-magnificent, sir," he stuttered. "They're d-d-divine, sir."

"I prefer them deviled," I said, like a flash, and while we laughed heartily together over this titbit, his palsy passed. I endeavor to correct the habits and manners of my dependents by well chosen words of admonition, and this was such an opportunity.

"Why do you show such interest in this—this Bosco Bulge person, Carson?" I inquired, and he stiffened again. "Can you not see that the man is of a very low order of humanity? It is obvious to me that Bosco Bulge is not his real name."

"Maybe you're right, sir," Carson murmured, much impressed.

"He is some base fellow who has assumed this name in order to attract attention to himself," I proceeded. "Bosco Bulge! What a horrendous cognomen! Such a man would do anything to obtain publicity—would go to any extreme of danger or ridicule, simply to appear in the limelight. Throw the card away, Carson; I abhor even the suggestion of such a creature."

I came to an abrupt stop there, although I had a few more remarks in mind, and stared at Carson. The fellow was positively choking—he was purple in the face, and coughing, and making feeble movements with his hands.

"Carson!" I said sternly. "I am ashamed of you! You may leave the table if you haven't learned to eat your food."

He recovered almost at once. "I should certainly know how to eat by this time, sir," he said humbly. "I have had every opportunity to learn."

I accepted this apology, and I finished my eggs and several grilled chops without further discord. I detest disturbances at meals; it is hard on the digestion, and indicates a lack of proper interest in the matter of food.

In my dangerous and exhausting occupation of aviator—an occupation which frequently requires me to fly as long as an hour in a single day—I must conserve my strength. I am not like idle young men of my set, who do nothing but play polo—but I digress.

#### IV

HAVING bestirred myself so early, I proceeded to make use of my extra hour of activity. I determined that I would go at once to Brundage Field to make sure that Vanning had made all necessary preparations for the flight.

Another reason, too, animated me. I decided that it was as well that I be present early to keep an eye upon Mortimer Baltsby.

The fellow might by this time be so desperate as to endeavor to damage the machine or parachutes so that the duel of nerve and valor, in which he was so hopelessly outclassed, might not take place.

On my way to the field, passing in the car from my estate on the North Shore to Mineola, I was annoyed to see, in the neighborhood of Westbury, great glaring posters with the name of Bosco Bulge upon them. Apparently the reprehensible fellow was to make an appearance, or rather an exhibition of himself, somewhere in that neighborhood.

But as far as I could see—the Rolls was going as rapidly as my man could tool it through the clutter of trucks and cheap automobiles that are the curse of the highway—there was no specific mention of where and when the fellow was to make his bid for notoriety.

Carson, sensing my aversion to the man, tactfully endeavored to divert my mind to other topics, such as my coming triumph over Baltsby. In this he was fairly successful.

But when we arrived at the field I was annoyed to find Vanning himself, with an enormous pot of red paint, just approaching his plane. The machine stood outside the hangar.

And Mortimer Baltsby, with his snake-like smile, was sitting in the cockpit. The instant he saw me he became overcome by a fit of coughing. Vanning, looking up, stopped dead in his footsteps and stared at me.

"What are you doing with that horrible red paint, Vanning?" I asked him sharply.



"It reminds me of the color of the frightful posters advertising some wretch calling himself Bosco Bulge."

Vanning set the pot of paint down, but continued to stare at me. He was frowning perplexedly.

"What was I doing with it?" he repeated. His eyes flicked from me to Baltsby. "That's it—what was I doing with it?"

Baltsby, looking over the side of the machine, replied:

"You told me the paint reminded you of that frightful Bosco Bulge too, and that you were going to chuck it away on the field."

"That's it!" exclaimed Vanning in some relief.

What a frightful memory the man must have, I reflected!

He picked up the paint, but paused.

"No," he said. "I won't chuck it here, where I'd be seeing the remains of it all the time. I'll just take it around back of the hangar, and spill it there. Yep, that's what I'll do."

He turned and walked briskly out of our sight. I glanced disdainfully at Baltsby, and awaited Vanning's return in silence. Carson, as usual, was sniggering at my side.

"Well, boy, how are you feeling this morning?" inquired Mortimer, concealing his agitation behind a friendly tone. "All ready to emulate an angel—a couple of angels, I mean?"

"Tell the man his conversation is as offensive as it is dull," I instructed Carson. "And say I shall take steps if he refers to me again as 'boy.'"

But Vanning returned at that moment, walking rapidly, and commenced to speak as soon as he got near me.

"Look here," he said. "You're wise, all right, to come this early to keep an eye on Baltsby, because he might try to double-cross you; but I've a lot of things to do this morning, and I can't do 'em with both you chute jumpers around. How 'bout you taking Baltsby for a little ride with you in that one-room apartment on wheels until it is time to hop off? That way he can't get away with any dirty work."

How well Vanning understood Mortimer Baltsby, I thought!

"An excellent idea," I said. "But Baltsby would never consent to give up his last moment attempts at chicanery or sabotage."

My rival climbed briskly out of the cockpit of the three-seater.

"I'll call you on that," he announced loudly. "Only you must promise not to drive, Parminter. I'm not convinced you know a straight line from a curve."

He strolled toward the Rolls. Turning, he cupped his hands, and shouted back to Vanning, who stood watching us attentively:

"Westbury expects every man to do his duty, Vanning!"

This was a specimen of his feeble, strained attempts at humor during the rest of that morning. It was a terrific ordeal.

Finally, in order to rid myself of his unbearable presence and chatter, I instructed Sands, the footman, to change places with me, I taking his seat beside the chauffeur on the box, and he entering the car.

Baltsby expressed himself as charmed with this arrangement, and requested me to extend his sympathy to the chauffeur. Thereafter he amused himself by shouting pointless remarks into the communicating telephone.

My man frequently shook with repressed rage at the wheel, and once I had to speak to him about almost leaving the road. As for myself, I bided my time in silence.

We lunched at different tables at a road house near Bay Shore. I cannot conscientiously recommend their sweetbreads, but the new peas were excellent. Perhaps I do the sweetbreads an injustice; the presence of Baltsby may have influenced my judgment. But I perceive that I digress.

We did not return to the field until a quarter of three. Vanning, in greasy flying jumpers, awaited us. I perceived that he had spilled some of the red paint on himself, in throwing it away.

As he was not to appear at the Nassau Polo Club, but merely to fly the plane over the field, I did not criticize his attire. He was the type of man to take offense on the slightest provocation.

"Come on, now, you two," he greeted brusquely, as the footman swung open the doors. "Pile out, and climb into that parachute harness. It's almost time to hop off."

"Take your choice," Mortimer Baltsby said, with a wave of his hand toward the two parachute packs and harness that lay on the grass. "Pick out the one that looks as if it could stand the strain of carrying a

young safe. I'll take what's left. They're both—ah—prepared, are they not, Vanning?"

"We're all set," Vanning replied curtly. "Either will do the trick."

I paid no heed to Baltsby's pseudo-politeness, for I had already picked up the harness nearest me. It was too tight, having apparently been made for a man of most meager build. But it was possible to let out the straps to a proper size, and this was done for me by a grinning mechanic.

When the packs had been adjusted upon our backs Vanning spoke briefly.

"You know the principle of these things, or you ought to. They're properly folded; so when you jerk that ring at the end of the release cord, you pull out a small chute—a pilot chute. That catches in the wind of your drop, and pulls the main chute out of the pack. Don't pull that ring till you're clear of the plane. Jump, count three, and pull. If you pull too soon you may find yourself dangling on the tail or landing gear, like a cornucopia on a Christmas tree." He paused, and eyed me sourly. "Do you get me?" he asked. "Jump out of the cockpit, count three, and pull on that ring. Then there'll be a tussle between silk and gravity to see if you land on the earth or go through. Jump, count, pull!"

"I am familiar with the operation of a parachute," I said with dignity. "I suggest you confine your instruction to our polo-playing novice. I don't want him to quit, and allege that he didn't know how to operate the thing."

"Never mind me, deary," Baltsby said pertly. "You'll have other things to worry about when your chute opens."

"Enough debate," said Vanning. "No jumping till I raise my hand. That's important. All aboard! No! Not that way!"

I had attempted to pass around in front of the machine to examine it, but he seized me by the arm, and hustled me toward the rear cockpit. He seemed highly nervous; so I humored him and climbed in without inspecting the machine. Baltsby followed, and wedged himself into the cockpit beside me.

### V

"MAKES me feel like a dicky bird in a nest with a pouter pigeon," he said, wriggling with unnecessary vigor.

"Keep to your own side," I commanded tersely.

"What's that—the outside? Put your fat leg in your pocket, or dangle it over the edge. Where do you suppose I'm going to sit?"

I ignored all this, making allowance for his agitation. Muttering peevishly, he finally squashed in beside me.

The motor had been idling, fully warmed up, and no sooner had we finally settled down in the cockpit than Vanning vaulted into his own compartment, farther forward. He waved his hand to a mechanic to withdraw the chocks from under the wheels, and we started with a lurch.

As he taxied across the field to point his machine into the wind, Baltsby grunted and moaned theatrically at every bump that threw me against him, and bellowed something about the subway. Fortunately the roar of the motor was too strong for me to hear.

The machine was quite slow on the take-off, but once in the air it pointed skyward somewhat abruptly, almost before we had acquired proper flying speed. Vanning, pushing the stick forward hurriedly, turned an accusing eye back at me.

I was unable to tell him, because of the uproar, that his machine was poorly balanced, and that my weight in the rear had nothing whatsoever to do with the fact that it was what flying men call tail-heavy.

This is a most regrettable state of affairs, as the result of such a condition is sometimes an unpremeditated slide, tail first, toward earth.

Nor was I reassured by the manner in which the motor was running. It was not missing, but it was running roughly. The harmony of its diapason was not convincing, if I may make myself quite clear.

Vanning circled the field twice, climbing all the while, and at such an angle that I wondered if he could point the machine nose downward at all. He made no attempt to land, however.

This was encouraging, for I was alert to crush my gasconading friend Baltsby at no matter what personal cost. And I am rarely injured in a plane crash.

My instructor, who was injured several times in the course of my instruction, profanely attributed this to the cushion of flesh about me, but I am sure that it was due more to presence of mind.

Only one thing troubled me at that time.

Was I cheapening myself and the name of Parminter by deigning to compete with this fellow? After all, it is not dignified to leap from a plane in association with a man like Baltsby, whose grandfather was reputed to have shares in a whisky importing firm.

And then, parachute jumping itself is hardly a properly recognized form of recreation. Doubtless this thought had come to my mind as a result of the glaring manner in which that unspeakable exponent of the art, Bosco Bulge, was being advertised.

But I am a man of vast determination, and when I embark upon a project it is as good as done. In this case—but I must not foreshadow the events of that afternoon.

My doubts as to the dignity of the affair were strengthened when the plane, its motor still lacking in rhythm, arrived over the Nassau Polo Club field. I perceived that Baltsby had not been jesting when he said that he intended to tell a few friends.

The grounds of the club were jammed with people—many more people than a gentleman could possibly know. There are not so many people in the world whose antecedents and position make them worth knowing as I perceived all around the edges of the polo field upon which we were to jump.

And outside the grounds, upon the roads thereabouts, were many other people. The roadsides seemed packed with the small black patches that are the tops of cars.

Obviously Baltsby had made of our gentlemanly competition a thing of vulgar display, I thought, and I turned upon him a fiery and indignant eye.

But he was leaning far over the side, gazing downward at the spectacle below, and laughing. I could feel the laugh throbbing in his body, tight-pressed against my side, although I could not hear it.

Vanning, too, I was grieved to see, had entered into the same uncouth spirit of the spectacular, and began to put the machine through a series of banks, turns, and zooms.

Fortunately the motor was behaving so badly that it was not possible for him to indulge in any of the more startling of aerobatical evolutions such as are the stock in trade of the stunt flyer.

Once he turned backward to regard us, and I could perceive beneath the customary expression of pessimism upon his face a lively apprehension concerning his motor.

Nevertheless, he did not give the signal for the jump which we had agreed upon. He continued to fly wild, but steadily gained altitude.

Baltsby, still with his face over the side, continued to laugh, as if unable to contain himself. Once he straightened up and looked at me, but the sight of my somber and sedate countenance merely seemed to send him into redoubled paroxysms.

So close together were we that every shake of his body communicated itself to me. I suffered acutely, in mind and body, during those moments, but stoically I consoled myself with the thought that soon it would be my turn to laugh.

Not for a moment did I cease to believe that the man would weaken at the crucial instant. Obviously, this unrestrained mirth at the sight of the vast crowds below had something of the hysterical about it.

Finally, after Vanning had flown erratically about the entire territory encircling the club, he turned backward again. Ignoring my expression of righteous rebuke, he motioned to both of us to stand up. He throttled down the motor to as low a speed as was possible in the tail-heavy condition of the ship.

Baltsby and I, not without some jostling of our persons, succeeded in standing up in the cockpit. Vanning had turned forward again, for the motor, as soon as it was throttled down, had begun to miss. He opened the throttle wider.

We were still some distance from the field, but the speed of the machine was such that it was necessary for us to be all ready some time ahead of the actual jump.

The slip stream of air from the propeller whipped about us, and I felt sure that Baltsby would realize now most acutely what a perilous thing it was to leap from this fast-moving airplane into the wilderness of space below us.

We were so high now that the landscape had taken on that appearance of unreality—of painted houses, fields, and roads—that is the effect of altitude.

And then, with a startling abruptness, the motor ceased to function. Its roar vanished utterly from our ears, leaving in its place the hum of the wind through the interplane wires, and the low whistle of the propeller, which still turned.

Vanning swung around in his seat with great haste.

"Jump, both of you!" he commanded,

and his voice reached us but thinly. "I'll have to stretch a glide to the field. Lively! I don't want to crack up a good ship."

## VI

With my usual intelligence, I realized the situation at once. There was no real reason for agitation. As the motor was dead, the plane could only glide. And with three men on board, it would be necessary to glide more steeply than if the plane were lightly laden.

With Baltsby and myself out of the ship, it could reach the field in safety. Otherwise it must take its chances on landing among the houses, trees, telephone poles, automobiles, and other obstructions roundabout.

I turned without hesitation to my side of the ship, groping for the release ring of my parachute, and pushing back a bit against Baltsby that I might step up on the seat. My keenly intelligent eyes were looking downward. I took a firm grip of the ring my fingers encountered, and leaned quickly forward, away from Baltsby.

The next instant I straightened up again, utterly bewildered.

In that microscopic moment Baltsby, who had been standing back to back with me in the cramped cockpit, had suddenly been flicked out of the compartment and flung backward, past the tail, into the thin air beyond.

It was if the man had been dispatched from the plane like a stone from that childish instrument known as a bean shooter.

My amazement lasted but a moment. Then I perceived what had happened.

Baltsby, while still jammed against me in the cockpit, had pulled his release ring, instead of waiting until after he had jumped clear. Doubtless he had hoped thus to beat me—to make the first jump—instead of merely following me ingloriously. It was most unfair of him.

The founts of indignation welled up in me. I turned angry eyes to the parachute behind and below us. It was oscillating wildly, but it had opened properly. Baltsby's base strategy had succeeded, and he was safe.

What was there for me to do now? To follow the lead of this cheater, this man devoid of morals and honor, as if I had feared to make the first jump? No! A thousand times, no! Never would a Par-minter slavishly go after a mere Baltsby!

"Never!" I shouted to the wind of space. "Never! I won't have anything more to do with him!"

In my frenzy of just resentment against his base trickery, I had completely disregarded all else. I now perceived that the plane was diving downward at a terrific rate of speed.

Turning forward, I observed that Vanning was having what I have since heard termed a cat fit. In other words, he was suffering intensely from the most lively apprehension.

But I had little sympathy with him in this. What matter if his miserable ship did crack up instead of reaching the field? Certainly we were descending in a very sharp dive.

I looked back again, and my eyes encountered the tail of the machine. I must confess that I felt a slight amount of apprehension myself at the sight that met them.

In leaving the plane, Baltsby's body had scraped along the fuselage and struck the tail, severely damaging the tail plane, elevators, and rudder. This, then, was why we were falling, why Vanning was exhibiting such vivid fear. We were out of control.

Must I then jump, after all—appear to be following my treacherous rival? A Par-minter follow a Baltsby?

"No!" I repeated. "No! Never! I won't compete with him. I won't even speak to him!"

I perceived that what was required in the situation was weight upon the tail of the machine, to take the place of the surfaces damaged by the perfidious Baltsby.

I am, I may have mentioned, of quite a sturdy build. Accordingly, I climbed backward from the rear cockpit up the incline of the fuselage.

My mind was not upon my movements, for I was still moodily considering the baseness of a world which harbors, and indeed even cherishes, such things as Baltsbys.

Nevertheless I succeeded in reaching such a position as to cause the machine to change its movement from a dive to a mere glide. Vanning, I saw, could still control the plane by means of ailerons and what remained of elevators and rudder, once I lay along the fuselage.

But these details made little impression upon me. What I desired to know was whether I could hope for any satisfaction



against Baltsby if I complained to the house committee.

We landed—Vanning managed to make the field, I noted with uninterested eyes. I descended from the plane, and stood listlessly beside it, framing in my own mind the letter I should send to the chairman of the house committee.

But Vanning jumped from his seat, and fairly ran toward me. He seized my surprised hand in both of his, and wrung it with a zeal unexpected in one of his temperament.

"You saved my life!" he exclaimed. "Parminter, you're a hero!"

"What of it?" I said impatiently. "Vanning, do you think a gentleman might, without loss of dignity, have recourse to the courts for a base deception like this?"

"Huh?" he asked, somewhat puzzled by my absorption. "What 're you glooming about?"

"He deliberately—" I began, but he halted me abruptly.

"Look here, Parminter, I reckon I owe you something," the man said. "I'll put you on. Come around in front of the ship."

People were running toward us, but they were not near as yet. He led me around to the front of the plane and, bending low, pointed at the under surface of the lower wing.

My horrified, protruding eyes beheld upon the wing, in scarlet letters many feet high, the frightful words "BOSCO BULGE!"

"Bosco—what—how—" I began; but he went on:

"It's on the under side of both chutes, too," the pilot said with mournful satisfaction at my surprise. "We framed you—he wasn't going to jump at all—he put up posters, and he got all the society people and reporters in town out here to see a plane stunt—and you was it. You was to be nicknamed Bosco Bulge. But—"

"Me?" I sat down upon the ground in stupefaction. "I—Bosco Bulge?"

"C'rrect," said Vanning. "You was Bosco Bulge—only you aren't. He is—an' I reckon they're all giving him the ha-ha now. He must 'a' lost his nerve and jumped when the motor quit."

"I was Bosco Bulge?" I repeated, and then suddenly I saw it. I saw it—the whole stratagem that was to make me, a Parminter, ridiculous in the eyes of the

world—a butt of the press—a jest in my clubs—I!

He didn't intend to jump at all—I was to descend alone, from a gaudily painted ship, with a red-lettered parachute—as Bosco Bulge!

Lucky it is that I have a strong constitution, for otherwise I should most certainly have fainted. As it was, I continued to sit there on the grass, rather aimlessly, for I had no strength to move.

The sound of rapid, running footsteps caused me to look up. Baltsby, still clad in the parachute harness, though he had discarded the parachute, came dashing up to us.

His speed was most extraordinary. His black eyes were shooting sparks; his feeble mustache bristled; his interesting purple face rocked from side to side.

He literally pranced in front of me, pointing downward at me—wrestling at his collar, and trying to speak.

"You — you — you — you — you!" he wailed at last.

"Yes?" I inquired coldly, once more myself—a perfect Parminter.

"You—you—"

"I heard all that," I said, glancing toward the crowd of people that was rushing toward us. "If you wish to say anything to me, sir, you must be brief. I see some friends coming."

"You bl-blackguard!" Baltsby finally burst forth. "You pulled my release ring! You bl-bl-bl-blasted blackguard! And they're calling me a coward! You—you—pulled it!"

"Mr. Bulge," I said, and he reeled before my coolness, "your remarks are insulting. As Carson is not around, I must ask you to cease to address me."

And I arose and turned from him as the first of the wave of people arrived at the plane. They surrounded me, patting and thumping my back, and shouting loudly their encomiums over what they rightly called my splendid courage in sticking to a disabled plane and saving the pilot, when I might have jumped.

It is rarely that my character has so heartily received its due. I perceived among the crowd several of those young men who had been present when the discredited Baltsby and I had made our agreement. They were particularly cordial.

So emphatic, so boisterous, even, were they, that Baltsby found it quite impossi-

ble to make himself heard, though I must admit that, dancing around outside the circle that surrounded me, he tried.

It was a pleasant afternoon. Nor was the next morning, when I read the newspaper accounts of the affair, a bad one. The whole conspiracy was there—how the “misguided young man,” as Baltsby was called, planned with Vanning to play a practical joke upon me, and how Baltsby’s nerve cracked when the motor stopped, and he almost killed the pilot and myself in his efforts to save his own miserable skin.

The stories also dwell, with commendable

prominence, upon my superb daring in saving Vanning by climbing the fuselage.

Some space—though not much—was given to Baltsby’s explanation, and I understand from various friends of mine, old and new, that he is continuing to explain.

One thing puzzles me—could I, as I leaned away from Baltsby to jump, really have taken hold of the wrong release ring? It is a phase of the matter I find interesting to ponder over. I must make no rash decision one way or the other; so I continue to ponder. And meanwhile I have with difficulty restrained myself from sending Baltsby a package of throat lozenges.

## Mrs. Gaylord’s Handicap

A STORY OF MACHIAVELLIAN TACTICS ON THE LINKS OF THE  
MAVONIA COUNTRY CLUB

By James Kevin McGuinness

MARJORIE WARREN was fair, forty, and bewitchingly slender. Like her sister matrons, she abhorred the fleshiness that so many Victorian wives accepted as complacently as they did marriage. In her case, golf clubs were the magic wands which banished obesity.

This morning she sat within the shadows of the Mavonia Country Club veranda, rocking idly. Her content was as deep as the coolness that surrounded her, for all was well with her world, and she was not unaware that her sports garb was decidedly attractive.

The blazing stretches of sandy fairways were still strange to her sight. Hitherto, to Marjorie Warren, golf links had been the roll and fall of soothing turf, broken occasionally by the gleam of a trap or the deeper green of the shadow cast by some stretching elm. Here they were white, dotted with isles of grass, and unfamiliar trees—coco-nut palms and palmettos—lined the boundaries of the course.

This was her first visit to Florida. For five years the O’Neills had been coaxing Blair and Marjorie Warren to spend a

winter with them. Now, with Junior safely at preparatory school, and her daughter, Lenora, turned eighteen into young womanhood, the way had been cleared for her acceptance. Her husband would be down soon, for a two weeks’ stay.

Shane O’Neill had done well in the world, Marjorie Warren reflected. It was not without amusement that she recalled how her father had been dubious of the wisdom of approving a match between Suzanne and the bright young son of an Irish immigrant. Colonial ancestry is a caste not easily forgotten. Her sister’s husband had progressed, financially and socially, adding each year to his store of the world’s goods and his accumulation of the world’s polish. Yet he never lost, or tried to hide, that racy touch of the soil which was his best charm.

Her own husband, too, was a successful man—not so wealthy as Shane O’Neill, for the monetary rewards of legal practice come later in life, but sufficiently comfortable. Blair had gained an admirable reputation at the bar, and for the last two years his fees had mounted far above the needs of the calmly ordered lives they led.

"Yes," thought Marjorie Warren, "it is a fair world to me. If I had to choose again, I would not want my life otherwise."

Once, though, she had rebelled at the thought of motherhood. No matter how many nurses and maids Blair supplied to relieve her from care, the coming of her two children meant the surrender of certain freedoms. Existence became partially cloistered. Tournament golf had to go, and for one who played as well as Marjorie Warren this was a real sacrifice. Of course, she could get in an occasional round, but such games were sketchily incomplete, and filled with worry as to whether the cook would remember to order lettuce for salad, and whether nurse would feed the youngsters at the proper hour.

Of late years, with both her daughter and son grown out of childhood, she had had more time for play, but she did not get away from home frequently enough for proper practice. As a matter of fact, she didn't want to.

She smiled now at the thought that playing in a golf tournament had ever meant much to her. There were thrills in competition and flushes in victory, but these, she had come to know, were as nothing compared to the enduring satisfaction of watching one's own reproductions take form, manner, and soul.

Now she was in a tournament again. Lenora had teased her into entering. It was her first in—yes, Lenora was eighteen—in nineteen years.

"Heavens, what an eternity!" Marjorie Warren told herself, with a smile. "Did you ever expect to be old enough to play in a tournament with your own daughter also a competitor?"

A score of years ago she would have been fevered with excitement, anxious to get to the first tee, and to know the joy of hearing that sharp, pistol-like click which tells a good drive even before the ball starts to rise. She had drawn a bye in the first round, and this pleased her, for Marjorie Warren was not really anxious to begin play. She enjoyed the relaxation of her vacation thoroughly, with no household to be ordered and no interminable menus to be planned.

Never again could tournaments be important, or anything more than idle pastime. Her interest in this one was to see Lenora win. The luck of the pairing gave

her an opportunity to go around the course at least once and watch her daughter play. She was waiting for this now, instead of practicing diligently, as she would have done of old.

She became aware, without turning her head, of a significant stir on the lawn that sloped away from the veranda—such a stir as tells any woman that an exceptionally attractive example of her sex is electrifying the air with her presence. Even contentment does not wholly banish curiosity, so Marjorie Warren shifted her position to take in the scene below.

The newcomer was young—in her early twenties, Marjorie Warren estimated, even allowing for such aids to youth as an extremely boyish bob. Her sport hat was shaped like those close-fitting helmets which adorn the heads of Greek goddesses in martial array, but the soft silks of her blouse were anything but warlike in appearance. They whipped about her form in the wind, clinging almost as tightly as if they had been caught in a sudden downpour of rain—a provocative play of shimmering garb which accentuated every random grace of her being.

About her was a group of men, laughing excitedly; and in this plus-foured coterie Marjorie Warren's gaze fastened on Dick Farright. He was carrying the attractive young lady's bag of clubs, swung carelessly by their strap from his broad shoulders. He was a fine, clean-cut boy, bronzed by every sun beneath which he had had a chance to play during his twenty-odd years. She wondered at his being in the electrifying girl's train, rather than with Lenora. Latterly, she had begun to hope—of course, youngsters married somewhat later in life now. She had been only twenty when she walked to the altar with Blair Warren, and her sister Suzanne was a year younger when Shane O'Neill claimed her heart. It was perhaps too early to consider Lenora in that light. Still—

Her brother-in-law's voice broke in on Marjorie Warren's reveries.

"And how is the assistant darling of my heart this morning?" he inquired genially.

"Lazy," Marjorie Warren answered. "Who is the handsome girl?" she asked, with an identifying nod toward the group below.

"You're not so lazy as to rest easy with that female dynamo about," Shane O'Neill observed sagely.

"Forget that you're a Celt for a moment, Shane, and answer a question without first supplying a philosophy."

Shane laughed, but he settled himself to reply.

"Her name is Sonia Gaylord," he said.

"Not Anthony Gaylord's widow?"

"The same. She married him two years ago, as you must have read in the papers. His will left her the income of the estate, providing she doesn't remarry, and from what I have seen of the young lady I judge she doesn't intend to sacrifice riches for love by marrying again; but I wouldn't say she intends to retire to a convent, either."

"She's fascinating," his sister-in-law observed, her gaze still appraising the young widow.

"So is fire—if you stand far enough away," mused Shane O'Neill. "There's Lenora coming out of the dressing room," he added. "Going round with her?"

Marjorie Warren nodded.

"Whom is she paired with?" she inquired.

"With the lady we have been discussing," her brother-in-law replied; "and that's no sweet assignment for Lenora, more's the pity."

"Mrs. Gaylord plays well?"

"Very well—and she likes to win too much to be a real sportswoman."

"I see!"

Marjorie Warren rose and accompanied Shane O'Neill down the wide flight of steps. He paused at their foot, while Lenora was still out of hearing, and observed grimly:

"Watching some of these tournaments, I've learned why they call them ladies' handicaps."

"Go ahead, Mr. Interlocutor," said Marjorie, smiling.

"Because a lady is under such a terrible handicap playing against some of the women in them," said Shane O'Neill, with a significant smile toward the company of youthful men following Sonia Gaylord to the first tee.

## II

"KEEP your shots straight, and let distance take care of itself," Marjorie Warren advised her daughter. "It's better to be short than sorry in golf."

"I'll do my best, oh, sage of the links!" the girl answered, and went off to take a few practice swings before her first drive.

"A little thin, but she's as lithe as a

deer," Marjorie Warren thought, as Lenora's slender body swung behind the club-head like a young willow springing from the wind's grasp.

The girl was dressed in a light tweed skirt, a sweater cuddling to her body, and a mannish panama inclosing her golden hair. Her stockings were cashmere, blocked in a diamond pattern of alternate buff and blue. A sensible attire for sport, reflected her mother.

Sonia Gaylord rather contemptuously classed her opponent's garb as frumpish.

There was an echo of Marjorie Warren's own youthful temperament in the earnestness with which Lenora devoted herself to the task at hand—playing golf. And there had been another in the response she made to her mother's question about Richard Farright.

"Mrs. Gaylord just vamped him into caddying for her," said Lenora pithily. "She knows that Dick's a good player, and she wants him for her partner in the mixed foursome next month. That woman would do anything to win a cup!"

With this estimate Shane O'Neill wholeheartedly agreed. As Lenora walked to the tee, he voiced an additional suspicion to Marjorie.

"Our lady of wiles has got young Farright to caddy for her in the hope of aggravating Lenora and affecting her play," he observed.

"That would be rather sharp practice, don't you think?"

"Sharp practice is her play in more games than golf."

"I noticed that she's wearing silk stockings—if you call that sharp practice," said Marjorie.

"Well, she's the sort of woman whose stockings are always a wee bit too sheer, and whose skirts are always just an inch too short, and whose evening gowns are always cut a fraction of an inch too low," Shane O'Neill elaborated. "Not that I want to be prudish, but I think you ought to play any game according to the rules every one else lives up to—that's all."

"Your modest 'all' would be enough to establish the millennium," the smiling matron responded.

Before three holes had been played, Marjorie Warren found herself in the grip of an excitement she had deemed lost twenty years ago. It was not golf alone which keyed her to such a pitch that she held her



breath while every shot was being made; it was the spectacle of her daughter coolly and silently pitting her tournament inexperience against the wiles of a woman who knew no object but to win.

Marjorie was swept by gusts of resentment as she watched Sonia Gaylord take every advantage that might turn toward victory. She could scarcely contain herself when her daughter's opponent carefully selected a high spot on the fairway on which to place her shot—which for all practical purposes was as effective as teeing up for her brassy shot.

"Do the local rules permit that?" she asked Shane, indignantly.

"Hardly," he answered dryly. "Winter rules are in force because we haven't got the course in perfect shape yet, but it's expected that people will play their lie unless they happen to find their ball in one of those deep sand ruts—and then only on the fairways are they privileged to move it. They ought to drop it over their shoulder, and not try to find a natural tee to play from."

"I thought as much!"

In the tense moments when Lenora was putting or addressing the ball on the tees, Sonia Gaylord used devices to distract the girl which would have put the most relentless of professionals to shame.

"Pardon me, dear, but you can hardly expect to reach the green with that iron," she said at the short sixth. "Don't you think a brassy, or even a driver, would be better for any one who plays like you?"

"She'd have an easy five here, only her putting is so poor," the silk-clad Sonia observed audibly at the exact second when Lenora swept her putter forward toward the eighth hole.

She would call to the men in her train whenever Lenora faced a difficult task, maintaining a fire of comment on her opponent's mishaps and shortcomings. She questioned the girl's announcements of the number of strokes she had taken for each hole, although every one present knew that Lenora Warren would sooner die than be guilty of falsifying her tally. She quibbled and disputed every possible interpretation of the rules.

In spite of all this, Lenora played coolly and efficiently, although not quite well enough to win against the handicaps her opponent imposed on her. The ninth tee found Sonia Gaylord one up.

"The hole that gave her the edge was the third, where she forgot to mention the two strokes she took getting out of the rough," Marjorie told Shane.

"It was three strokes," Shane amended. "I counted them."

The ninth was halved, and—since the preliminary matches were played at nine holes—the game ended in victory for Mrs. Gaylord.

"I'm sorry you had to lose, dear," said Sonia.

Lenora looked up from the bag in which she had been dropping some balls, and a smile fixed itself on her face. Marjorie watched closely to see how her daughter would take defeat. It is never pleasant to lose in the first round of a tournament, particularly when one should have won.

"I'm sorry you had to lose, dear—so sorry!" repeated Sonia.

"That's quite all right, Mrs. Gaylord," Lenora returned. "I'm sure I don't mind losing any more than you mind winning."

"Good girl!" murmured Shane O'Neill audibly.

Sonia Gaylord favored him with a cutting glance, and walked rapidly toward the clubhouse, her group of admirers scampering up the slope behind. Only Richard Farright lingered.

"I'm sorry, Len," he said awkwardly. "I wish I'd caddied for you, instead."

"It's just as well you didn't, Dick," she replied evenly. "I'd hate to have deprived you of the fun of caddying through the rest of the tournament."

"Oh, gosh, don't be so smart!" muttered the bronzed youth, dejectedly shouldering the vanished Sonia's bag.

Marjorie Warren walked over to her daughter and placed her arm around the girl's shoulders. Thus she led Lenora toward the dressing room.

"How do you feel about it, Len dear?" she asked tenderly.

"Perfectly rotten, mother," the girl answered, with a disconsolate sniff; "but you're the only person in the whole world I'd admit it to."

### III

THE golf course has an existence of its own; its own triumphs and its own disasters; its own rivalries and its own romances; its great moments and its trivialities; its traditional lore and its gossip. To those in its grip, the turf smells of the

links and the sharp clicks of the driven ball are the glory of life, and even the smallest of tournaments is regarded with deep seriousness. So, unless you had felt it buzzing about you, you could never know how excitedly the Mavonia Country Club discussed the wonder of its present day—the change in Marjorie Warren's game.

What little golf she had played during the early weeks of her visit to Florida had had about it the soundness of good training, but it had lacked the fire and the brilliance that make for victory in hard matches. Now the sweet, amiable matron, who had been content to lounge indolently on the veranda while others trudged the course valiantly, could be seen in the early hours each day diligently practicing with wood and iron. Steadily, as she progressed from round to round in the Ladies' Handicap, her control of her clubs increased. Her shots blazed with the daring by which champions assert their superiority.

Marjorie Warren was in the lower half of the draw; Sonia Gaylord was in the upper section. As the semifinals approached, it became evident that these two, barring some tragic ill luck to either, were destined to oppose each other in the finals.

A tenseness had settled on the club which rent its feminine detachment into two camps. The men, too, were divided in their sympathies, and the fact that they jested about favoring Sonia Gaylord or Marjorie Warren did not lessen the seriousness of their partisanship.

Shane O'Neill joked as pleasantly as any one; and yet it came to Marjorie's ears that he had been accepting all bets offered on Mrs. Gaylord by the more sporting contingent of the club's membership.

"You mustn't make any more bets on me, Shane," she protested. "It isn't right to turn a sport into a gamble."

"I'll pay what I win into the hospital fund," he answered; "but I can't let some of those followers of the dashing Sonia talk me down—particularly in the absence of your husband."

"Well, when Blair comes to-morrow, I shall make him take over your bets."

"They're not for sale," Shane informed her; "but if you feel that way about it, I promise not to make any more."

Her big, hearty husband was amused when he learned of the excitement on his arrival at the O'Neill home for the two

weeks' stay he had torn from his law practice.

"So you've gone back to tournament golf, Chips!" he chided. "Chips" was a nickname for Marjorie which dated back to their courtship and to her girlish fondness for the then all-conquering Saratoga chips. That, of course, was before dietitians had branded potatoes as fattening. "I've heard of golf widows, so I might as well reconcile myself to being the first golf widower," he went on.

"This will be my only offense, Blair," his wife promised. Then, with the languid fondness of long-enduring happiness and understanding, she added: "Really, friend husband, you're a much more exciting game than even golf!"

There was a dance at the club that night, on the eve of the finals in the Ladies' Handicap. The setting was such as only the semitropics could afford. A moon of almost midday brilliance lit the whiteness of the fairways. The clumped foliage of the palms formed silhouettes outside, like the baskets of some hanging garden perched atop their slender trunks. The sweetness of the magnolia bloom floated in the air, amid the scents of exotic perfumes which stirred provokingly when some gay couple passed.

The music of a jazz band softly crooned the slow, old-fashioned measures of the waltz or blared into the erratic noises of the Charleston. The swish of slipped feet was like the shifting of sands on the floor of the stone veranda, waxed to astonishing slipperiness by the squad of darkies who had labored melodiously through the afternoon.

Chiffons predominated among the women—gentle, relaxed draperies, reflecting the indolence of the climate, except when they were roused by the excitements of the dance. Even then they floated dreamily.

The men were flanneled and lined, the whiteness of their attire furnishing a pleasing contrast for their bronzed faces. Their sports garb was freshened by the bits of color that the preening male permits himself in the name of play—gay hose and startling neckwear.

"Dick Farright hasn't danced with Lenora yet," Suzanne O'Neill observed to her sister.

"Youth playing at being angry," Marjorie explained.

"Doesn't Lenora approve of his trailing with Mrs. Gaylord?"

"Would you?"

"Hardly," Suzanne smiled, as she rose to dance with her husband.

Lenora detached herself from the swirl of couples and walked over to her mother.

"Tired, dear?" Marjorie Warren gently inquired.

"Not exactly, but I don't feel like dancing," the girl replied, a slight droop at the corners of her mouth showing her dejection. "I had this dance with Murray Hart, and I begged off."

"Is it Dick?"

Lenora nodded disconsolately.

"It isn't fair, mother!" she protested.

"Mrs. Gaylord just monopolizes him. She does it so skillfully—I don't know, but somehow she just snatches him away without seeming to make any direct effort to do it."

"Perhaps you've helped her by pouting and being haughty when Dick tried to talk to you," Marjorie suggested.

"I'm not going to let any man walk over me!" declared Lenora.

"No, you shouldn't do that," her mother agreed. "Still, there are times when it is best not to be too frigid."

"Oh, men are all impossible," Lenora flung out. "Not one of them plays fair!"

"You're being unfair yourself in saying that," Marjorie Warren warned.

"You mean that dad is an exception," her daughter interpreted. "I suppose he is, but Mrs. Gaylord has him in tow, too. He's sitting out this dance with her."

Something clutched suddenly at Marjorie's heart—almost a sense of terror; but she suppressed it quickly. Yet in that moment a hundred dreads moved vaguely through her being, no less real because none took definite form. In the back of her mind a thought throbbed:

"Forty is the dangerous age—forty is the dangerous age!"

Aloud, she said:

"When you grow older, my dear, you will realize that no man can be kept tied to a pair of apron strings if he feels them holding him too tightly."

Lenora laughed pleasantly at this.

"How old-fashioned you sometimes are, mother!" she said. "Don't you know that the new generation doesn't wear aprons, and has no strings of any sort?"

"That seems to me the other extreme;

but of course each age has its own problems and its own solutions," Marjorie counseled. "Still, I wouldn't advise sitting out every dance, even if Dick has wandered away. When a woman's heart is touched, even slightly, it isn't good for her to sit alone with her thoughts."

But Marjorie Warren was not following her own philosophy. When Lenora had danced away in a youngster's arms, she sat wondering what significance there might be in the news her daughter had given her about Blair. She remembered what Shane O'Neill had said about Sonia Gaylord's having enticed Dick Farright into caddying for her during her match with Lenora. It would affect the girl's playing adversely, Shane had predicted. Of course, it was preposterous to believe that she would dare to try the same method with her opponent's husband.

Still, to-morrow afternoon would see the finals played in the Ladies' Handicap. Apparently Mrs. Gaylord was going to spend this evening monopolizing Blair as much as she might, in the hope that the effect on her opponent would not be any too steady.

For a flash of time Marjorie considered recalling Blair to her side, but this she dismissed as a ridiculous notion. It was an invariable rule between them that each should go whatever way chance might lead during a party, should seek what congenial company might be there, and should accept what pleasures of social intercourse might be available. For twenty years they had done this, and now was not the time for a departure from a method which had suited their lives so well.

If Blair chose to dance every dance with Mrs. Gaylord, that was his affair. Marjorie knew her husband too well to believe that any such extreme was possible, but she would have accepted it had it come to pass. She would play the game according to the rules, as Blair had done often enough when attractive men had rushed her at dances.

Yet something within her rebelled at the thought of allowing Sonia Gaylord to parade Blair before her, even as the most unwilling of captives. This was no ordinary incident of a dance, but an occasion tinged with rivalry. It was to avenge the hurt inflicted on Lenora that Marjorie had devoted long hours to coaxing her golf game back to something like its former excellence,

and the concentration necessary to accomplish this had also served to keep fresh her resentment.

Shane O'Neill stood suddenly at her elbow.

"Suzanne has deserted me for a young Frenchman with a title, a pretty bow, and a beautiful mustache," he confided. "Will you grant me the solace of letting me sit out this dance with you?"

"I'm sure you're worried about Suzanne's defection," Marjorie bantered. Then she became suddenly serious. "I wish to go home, Shane," she said. "I have a headache, and I really should get some sleep to be fresh for to-morrow's match. Will you order the car for me? I'll send the chauffeur back for the rest of you."

"At command," Shane responded. As he turned away, he, too, was seized by seriousness. He whirled about. "Look here, Marjorie! You're not taking anything too—well, too heavily?" he asked.

"Not at all," she assured him. "It's merely a headache."

"Don't let it be anything worse," he advised. "That's all I can say to you; but heed it."

Driving home in the brightness of the Florida moon, Marjorie was tempted several times to order the chauffeur to turn about and go back to the dance. She was behaving like a girl of eighteen, she told herself. It was for just such a pout as her present action—it really was nothing more than a pout, she confessed—that she had chided Lenora.

After all, however, she decided to go home to bed. Sleep was the best preparation for a hard game of any sort. She might as well go on, since she had started.

When Blair arrived home with the O'Neills and Lenora, an hour later, he found his wife, in a negligee, lying on the *chaise longue* in their room, reading.

"How's the head?" he asked.

"Much better, thanks."

He looked at her curiously.

"You know I had two dances with Mrs. Gaylord," he informed her.

"I didn't count, naturally," Marjorie answered.

Blair seemed to weigh this response and to evaluate it in his orderly mind.

"Don't think anything silly, Chips," he advised tenderly. "You know you're the only person in the world."

He bent down and kissed his wife's hair. Marjorie was soothed by the caress; yet she tossed, and turned, and wondered for nearly an hour after she went to bed before sleep finally infolded her.

#### IV

MARJORIE WARREN took steady grip of her nerves and swung her driver back with the slow surge of a pendulum. The knobby end started its downward flight, swishing as it gained momentum. Its arc led it fairly into the ball resting on a tiny mound of white sand. Like a roll of ticker tape flung to the wind, the globule made a streak of white in the air, darting out on a straight line, then climbing, and at last hitting the sandy ways, rolling onward a good twenty yards beyond where Sonia Gaylord's ball lay.

"A good beginning, you know," Sonia bantered, but with an evident spitefulness behind her smile.

"Oh, that! I'm really encouraged by having made such a poor start," Marjorie responded airily.

A flicker of a frown passed on the young widow's face, but she banished it instantly.

"Well, we shall see," she said, and started down from the first tee.

Dick Farright picked up her bag of clubs and trailed at her heels, but he was walking as if his burden really weighed on him, and not with the jaunty youthfulness that had effervesced in him during the earlier rounds of the tournament. He gave the impression, without wanting to do so, that the task he had welcomed two short weeks ago was distasteful to him now.

Marjorie Warren's face was expressionless, but there was a satisfied smile somewhere within her. About Sonia Gaylord still clustered the two extremes of manhood in the gallery—the youths and the aged. Those safely between the two poles of masculine impressionism were gathered in knots on the side of the fairway, where Shane O'Neill and Blair Warren had taken positions of vantage.

Descending the slope from the tee, Marjorie wondered what it was that her husband had said to Mrs. Gaylord just before the match started. They had been in earnest conversation. Blair had been his usual complacent, easy-going self, but some of the sprightliness had departed from the bubbling Sonia. She seemed to droop, and the effort by which she resumed her sparkle



had been apparent to those of her sisters who were sufficiently practiced in the ways of the world to make such delicate observations.

Marjorie felt an overwhelming curiosity, but she knew that in good time she would learn from her husband what the conversation had been.

Walking toward the place where her ball lay, she gripped herself and determined to think of golf, to the exclusion of all else, until the game should be done.

Never in all her golfing days had Marjorie Warren known such supreme control of her clubs as she possessed that afternoon. It was one of those rare times—rare even in the lives of expert golfers—when everything went just right. The ball sailed straight as an arrow from the tees. Her brassie and iron shots were perfection of their kind. Mashie and niblick tossed off the lofting balls which settled with little run on the greens. Her putts went unreasonably true.

When the first nine holes were finished, she had her opponent five down. Such a margin between players in a final match is not a mere defeat; it is a rout. It was evident that something was disturbing the young widow's self-control. In her every action she showed disquiet.

They started the second nine with Sonia Gaylord in an unamiable temper. She was blaming her poor play on everything except herself. Her clubs were at fault, the balls were imperfectly manufactured, and would not roll true—thus, and in many similar ways, she excused herself for failure.

The vivid luster was gone from her eyes, and a dull gleam of sullenness stealed there instead. Her voice was petulant. She quarreled incessantly with Dick Farright.

"I should have taken a regular caddy," she said sneeringly. "It's too much to expect an amateur to know anything!"

"Well, I'm learning a lot on this round," countered Dick, with a poise that he had forced himself to adopt in self-protection.

From the tenth tee, Sonia followed Marjorie's brilliant drive with a ball which started straight, but which developed an exasperating slice at the zenith of its flight. It fell well in the rankled undergrowth which lined the fairways.

"Want me to swear for you?" one of Mrs. Gaylord's adherents asked.

"Thanks—I'm quite capable of doing my own," she replied icily.

"I can well believe that," Shane O'Neill whispered to Marjorie. "Go on and slaughter her! Don't let her win a hole!"

"Don't be vindictive," Marjorie advised. "The poor woman is suffering, I'm afraid."

A clump of tangled bush hid Sonia from the vision of the gallery while she was playing out of the rough. Only Dick Farright, as her caddy, was near. Presently the ball arched into sight and settled on the fairway. An iron shot trickled to the edge of the green, and two putts sufficed to put it into the cup.

"What did you have?" Mrs. Gaylord inquired.

"Five," Marjorie Warren answered. "I was on in two, but I needed three putts to go down."

"Then we halve the hole," murmured Sonia. She glanced toward Dick Farright and asked, as if for confirmation: "I had a five, didn't I?"

"You did not!" Dick heatedly contradicted. "You took three shots to get out of the rough."

Sonia Gaylord's eyes blazed with intense anger, but she contrived to make her voice coo innocently.

"Practice swings included, I presume," she murmured. "I really didn't know—"

"You're not allowed practice swings in the rough," Dick insisted stubbornly. "Those weren't practice, anyway. You moved the ball a foot each time until the third shot got you out. You had a seven."

"Your honor, Mrs. Warren," said Sonia irritably, after she had bored Dick with a spiteful glance.

Two more holes sufficed for complete defeat. When the twelfth had been played she was eight down and six to go, and the contest ended.

The gallery straggled over the course toward the clubhouse, talking excitedly about the dethronement of Sonia Gaylord, who was striding away from the scene of her disaster. So great was her haste that she paid no heed to the breathless faithful who panted solace at her trim heels. Indeed, she fled so precipitately that she overlooked the formality of congratulating her successful opponent.

Dick Farright let the procession trail at Mrs. Gaylord's heels, and walked sheepishly to Lenora Warren's side.

"I've been an awful mutt, Len," he said. "Will you forgive me?"

The girl nodded shyly. With a smile of

satisfaction, Marjorie Warren saw the young couple fall farther behind, until their slow pace made them the rear guard of the returning gallery.

Blair had been first at his wife's side to congratulate her, and his voice had boomed with intense pride, which he made no effort to conceal. Shane O'Neill was bubbling over with gay excitement.

"Hoist with her own petard!" he gloated. "We served the goose some of her own sauce that time!"

"Your remark requires explaining," Marjorie prompted.

"Maybe Blair had better tell you," her brother-in-law chuckled; "although I claim credit for devising the Machiavellian scheme."

"The deuce with your mysteries! Tell me what it is."

Blair echoed Shane's deep-throated chuckle.

"Mrs. Gaylord let herself in for it by trying to rush me last night," he told his wife. "Shane said she would give me the opportunity, if I got into conversation with her to-day."

"Well?"

"If she hadn't tried to flirt with me, hoping I would respond and so upset you mentally, I never should have done it; but the lady deserved what she got."

"Will you stop talking in circles?"

"Immediately, my dear," Blair grinned. "Simply, Mrs. Gaylord asked me how she looked in her new dress, while we were talking at the first tee. I said I thought the dress adorable, and that I was heartbroken to see its effect spoiled by the run in the back of her stocking. Of course, it

was too late to change, with the match starting at once."

Marjorie frowned at this.

"But I didn't notice a run in her stocking," she protested.

"It was imaginary," her husband replied.

"I'm sorry you did it," she said at last. "The poor woman must have suffered torments."

"She wasn't sorry for Lenora, was she?" Shane countered.

"My regret is directed at the method, rather than the victim. The Inquisition couldn't have devised a more fiendish torment!"

They had reached the clubhouse by this time, where the clink of ice in tall glasses chimed with the small talk of the groups already settled on the veranda. Marjorie started toward the dressing rooms, and was halted by Lenora's call. Her daughter ran toward her, blurting out excitedly:

"Dick and I are going to be partners in a mixed foursome. Won't that be splendid?"

"Glorious!" agreed Marjorie. "You two should win the cup."

"Oh, we don't expect to—particularly not if you have a good partner."

"But I'm not going to enter."

"You're not?" Lenora asked in amazement. "Why not, mother?"

Marjorie Warren smiled contentedly.

"I find I enjoy tournaments more as a spectator than as a competitor," she told her daughter. "Besides, with all the time I've given to this one, I'm away behind on the embroidery I planned to do during my vacation."

### SALT OF THE SEA

A SMOOTH-CLIPPED lawn is fair to see,

And strong trees standing high;

While the moist, rich brown of fresh-turned earth

Holds many an eye.

There's miser's gold in firm white sand,

Sun in the goldenrod;

But wide blue skies and the wild blue sea

Are the smile of God.

Oh, mine is not a sailor's life!

I've a snug house in a wood;

But blue of the sea and salt of the sea

Are in my heart's blood.

Edith Loomis

# The Marquise's Miniature

THE STORY OF A GIRL WHO THOUGHT SHE WAS INVITED TO  
A FOOTBALL GAME, BUT FOUND HERSELF INVOLVED  
IN AN AMATEUR BURGLARY

By Gertrude Pahlow

"EVERYBODY out! Everybody out!" squalled the brakeman, with the raucousness germane to his profession, as the train drew up at the pretty gray station.

There was no need of his advice. Everybody was already getting out, in shoals—handsome shoals, rich shoals, shoals velveted and furred and laden with thick, soft rugs. Everybody was laughing, chattering, greeting friends, being met by big, beaming youths in raccoon coats. Everybody was in the gay holiday mood, garnished with violets or yellow chrysanthemums, that goes with a big football game.

Everybody but Bee.

She postponed leaving the car as long as she could. She hung back inside the doorway, watching the platform, hoping with an ever fainter and sicker hope that one of the big raccoon coats might turn out to contain Phil; but none did.

Gradually the platform emptied, the crowd surged up toward the campus and the center of the little town, and there was no one left but the station hangers-on, and Bee. Well, of course he really hadn't specifically said that he would meet her.

Going down the car steps, and following slowly in the wake of the merry crowd, she recapitulated, for the hundredth time, exactly what he *had* said. In cold black and white it wouldn't look like very much.

"I think you're the prettiest girl I ever saw. You must come down to the Yale game, and have lunch at our house. I want my mother to see you; my sister isn't a patch on you. You're awfully sweet, Bee! Your mouth's so red! I never saw a girl as sweet as you."

But moonlight and a softly plashing sea and a still August night make up a magic

dictaphone. It had seemed as if he said, as the vulgar would put it, a bookful.

And in himself, Phil—so big, so handsome, so conquering, with his perfect grooming and his flashing white teeth and his manner of easy dominance—was a magic dictaphone, too; so much so that his words, especially after they came to be garnished with kisses, had a thousand overtones of meaning not contained in the actual syllables; so much so that when Bee left Sequonset she had thought herself engaged to him.

Nassau Street! She asked her way of a policeman, and turned into a lovely avenue fringed with chestnut trees, bordered with pretty houses set in a spacious, gracious arrangement of lawns and hedges. There was a solid phalanx of glossy motors in the roadway, and a steady procession of glossy people on the sidewalk. As she moved along with them, she told herself forlornly that she was like a small gray minnow in a stream of large and brilliant goldfish.

This sent her back to the mood of fierce resentment with which she had noticed the change in Phil after she had told him that she was a stenographer. Perhaps she ought to have mentioned the fact sooner; but it had been such fun, during that brief plunge into the bright world of play-all-you-please-and-hang-the-expense, to forget workaday things; and there had been no time; and she had truly, honestly thought it didn't matter.

Of course it had been a silly performance to fling her all into such a reckless vacation. She saw now that it had registered her under false colors; but what about the colors of Phil, who had kissed her so hotly and held her so close, and

who now, because she earned an honest living by honest toil, had let his letters grow short and cool, had written more and more rarely, and of late had not written at all? Are those colors to swear allegiance to?

Still, as she had told herself so many times, all this might be the work of her imagination. She could not judge without seeing him. That was why she had come to-day. After all, he had asked her to go to the Yale game; after all, he had invited her to lunch at his home. When she had said she would rather wait for an invitation from his mother, he had first explained that his mother kept open house to all their friends on the days of big games, and then had added, in the grand manner:

"I'm the master of the house! Can't I invite my girl to my house myself if I want to?"

And when, to make sure there was no misunderstanding, she had asked him—in a letter—the exact date, he had answered—on a postcard:

Nov. 13, two o'clock. Hope we have a good day.

That had sounded definite enough; but he hadn't met her at the station. Well, perhaps she had taken the wrong train.

She had reached the house, and at sight of it she stopped short. This was a house that could only be called a mansion. Unlike the neighboring houses of professors and townspeople, it was guarded by a stone wall and an iron gate. Outpost cypresses and sentinel shrubberies further defended its granite fastnesses. It was as sternly exclusive as only an abode of the newly rich can be. Phil had shown her its picture, but she had never thought it would be as fearsome as this. There was something about it that made her catch her breath.

However, Bee hadn't come so far to turn back now. She pressed her red lips firmly together, and joined the thin but steady stream of people turning into the well defended path.

There was a deep pillared portico, like the entrance to a tomb, from which opened a cavernous doorway like the entrance to a cathedral. In the doorway stood an august person with a fishy eye, who inquired of each arrival, in an iron tone but thinly veiled with velvet:

"What name, please?"

Bee quailed. She hadn't thought of a butler. She became intensely conscious that her thin gray coat dated from last year, and that she had had to mend a finger of her glove before she came. To be announced, like a train, to the assembly; to have Phil's mother and sister stare at her through possible lorgnettes—anything was possible in such a house—was more than she could face. She stopped again, in the shelter of a pillar.

Providentially, at that moment, a covey of twittering, glittering girls crossed the portico, and the worn-looking matron at their head consigned them in bulk, as "the young ladies from the Spencer School." With an inspiration Bee attached herself to them, and entered without challenge. There isn't so much difference, she told herself defiantly, between a Spencer girl and a stenographer.

She kept her chin high, as she went on into a foyer that reminded her of the Pennsylvania Station; but it was not easy. The great rooms visible through the high, wide doorways—rose and ivory, rose and gray, cardinal and silver—were full of people in the kind of raiment that she often gazed at through shop windows on her way to work. The maid who offered to relieve her of her coat located the worn spot on the squirrel collar with a glance that made her feel like a beggar clothed in leprous rags. At the end of a long, brilliant vista she could see, greeting the guests, two gorgeous women who looked like the aunt and niece of the Queen of Sheba.

She couldn't meet Phil, for the first time in nearly two months, in this smother of show and chatter. She turned hastily from the crowded, sumptuous rooms, and slipped through an inconspicuous door on the other side of the hall.

## II

THE room in which Bee found herself was an ill lit, unimportant cubicle, perhaps designed as a waiting room for undesirable callers. It opened by an inner door into the end of a great dining room, where there was another aggregation of glossy people and shining tables and sideboards laden with Lucullan food.

She peered in shyly. The sight of the great silver platters of deliciousness reminded her vividly that she had had the lightest of breakfasts at the earliest of hours; but this atmosphere of sumptuous



stuffiness, so different from the starlit sea breezes amid which Phil and she had met, made her feel an alien and an intruder.

"May I get you something?" inquired a quiet voice close beside her.

She started. She had thought herself alone in the little dark room. Turning, she found at her elbow a young man of a type subtly different from the expensive youths who were leaving their coats in the hall—tall, thin, humorous, with glasses, and a quizzical glint in the eyes behind them; not quite shabby, but certainly no model for "What the Well Dressed Man Should Wear." He seemed as little indigenous to the highly upholstered environment as Bee herself.

"Why—" She hesitated. "I—I feel—"

"I know—you feel like a fish in a strange garret," answered he, with a twinkle. "So do I; but even a poor fish has to live, and these sweetbread patties are well worth toying with."

Bee considered, weakening. She was really very hungry, and the aroma of creamed sweetbreads lightly breathed upon by sherry has a seduction that is hard to resist. After all, she *was* an invited guest.

"We-ell," she conceded, "if you could get me one patty—"

The young man smiled at her. He had a very nice smile—not brilliant and flashing like Phil's, but slow, humorous, and with a subtle effect of sympathetic understanding.

"I could get you several," he said. "I know exactly how it's done. I've had three myself. I could get you some lobster salad, too, and some coffee. Just guard my plate, will you, and refrain from taking a bite out of a waiter, if possible? I can see that fat one tempts you. I'll be back with the first aid in a jiffy!"

He was off as he spoke, plunging into the congested luxury with an assurance that surprised her; and in a surprisingly short time he was back again, with both hands full.

"Did you defend my patty, and keep your teeth out of the fat waiter?" he asked her briskly. "Good! Now let's get this table into action. Let's deposit these viands on it, and ourselves on these handsome hand-carved chairs—and that, says John, is that!"

He seemed a purposeful and capable young man. In less than a minute he had mobilized, out of the nebulous resources of

the uncomfortable little room, a complete equipment for the administering of nourishment. The patties, the salad, the coffee of which he had spoken were spread out in appetizing array. A waiter followed with reinforcement of olives and nuts and little buttered rolls, and presto—what had been an emptiness and a forlornness was transformed into a delicious and highly satisfying sociability.

The two talked across the little table in an almost domestic coziness.

"Did I or did I not speak the truth about this nourishment?" inquired the young man. "You needn't answer—it's a purely rhetorical question. What I really want to know is, what's your name?"

"Beatrice Jamieson. What's yours?"

"Roger Kent. I'm a biologist by trade. I'll bet you're a—let me see—a librarian."

"You'll lose your money. I'm a stenographer."

She looked at him narrowly, to see if his warm, friendly gaze would change, as Phil's warm letters had done, at the announcement.

"Are you?" he answered, smiling his nice smile. "I'll bet you're a good one, then. I'll get my money back that way. What are you training for—private secretary?"

"No, I'm just supporting myself in the style to which I'm accustomed, while I try to learn to write." Clever of him to know that she was traveling toward a goal! Phil had simply dismissed the whole subject of work as something slightly indecent. "But how did you know I was a working girl?" she added, with curiosity. "Do I look so poor-but-honest?"

"No, you look too intelligent not to be. If you want to see what girls look like who haven't any job or any intention of getting one, look there!"

His glance directed hers through the door into the dining room, where three or four of the giggling bevy that had preceded her into the house had congregated close at hand. Though they were dissimilar enough in detail, a strong group-likeness united them. They were all extremely pretty, all luxuriously dressed, all touched with a vapidness that sat on them as daintily as their rouge. They were talking shrilly and simultaneously about their plans for the game.

"And so he said, 'Well, go and have lunch at Lucille's, then. You'll get a lot

more to eat there than at the club!' And so—"

"Oh, so do I! I adore to go to the clubs. You do see the *dandiest* boys there; but Mrs. White wouldn't—mean old thing—"

"Billy couldn't get away from them to come to the train, and so I have to meet him at the stadium. Horrid bore, isn't it?—with all his family, of course—but then afterward—"

"Oh, didn't you know? I'm going with Phil!"

This last statement, shrill and emphatic, cut through the welter of chatter like a bullet, and struck on Bee's ear with the force of one. She looked at the speaker—a creamy-skinned, red-haired doll, in a frock of white wool banded with ermine. There was no doubt whatever that she was speaking the truth, and suddenly it seemed a truth that was predestined and inescapable, like a law of nature. Obviously, infallibly, she was the girl who would go to the game with Phil.

Bee wondered, with a sick feeling of incredulity, how any one could ever have imagined that it would be Beatrice Jamieson.

She looked back again at her companion, and found him regarding her soberly with those keen, kind eyes, which seemed to understand everything. The color surged hotly into her cheeks, and she pushed back her chair and jumped up. She had put herself into the part, she thought, of one of those heroines of melodrama who came knocking at the door of the great house, demanding marriage lines; and she meant to get out of it as soon as possible. Odious, odious, that she should enter Phil's home as a pretender and an interloper—the beggar maid suing King Cophetua for breach of promise! Ugh!

"Sit still," said the young man in a quiet and matter of fact tone. "You've had nothing but half a patty and three bites of roll, and that isn't even what a dentist would call a temporary filling."

"But I—I must go," answered Bee, stammering in her perturbation. "It seems—I find—it—it's a mistake for me to have come at all. I have to leave at once!"

"Not until you have emptied your plate," said the young man firmly. "The world may not owe you and me a living, but certainly the Loomises owe us a lunch.

Go ahead and collect it. I'll make a scene, I'll make everybody point at you, if you leave now."

He looked as if he meant it, and Bee, intimidated, sank back into her chair. Of all things in the world, the one thing she desired most was to get away without any one's noticing her. She glanced around. The cream-white doll had seen her jumping up and was staring at her, probably scenting a lovers' quarrel. She picked up her fork hastily.

"That's the girl!" approved Roger Kent. "You do your duty by the vitamins, and I'll beguile the minutes with light conversation. Lovely weather, isn't it, for the time of the year? What is your opinion, if any, about the relative intelligence of men and women?"

Bee summoned enough poise to make a face at him, and tried to go on eating her patty. She was conscious of the red-haired girl watching her, and of the protection of her companion's kind, devoted attention; but her stunned thoughts went racing around her altered world—from which, now that Phil had dropped out of it, the bottom seemed to have dropped too—with-out finding anything to fasten to.

Phil had told her he loved her, had invited her to the game, had made her think she was engaged to him; and now he was taking a red-haired, ermine-trimmed doll to the game, and she herself had less right to his hospitality than any stranger! This very food before her—why, a tramp, asking for a hand-out at the back door, had as much right to it as she!

Oh, she couldn't stay any longer! Another taste of the patty would poison her! She pushed back her chair again.

"Sit still!" commanded Roger Kent, quietly but decisively. "That girl's watching you. You may not like it here. Neither do I; but we must see the thing through like good sports. In a few minutes everybody'll be leaving. Then we can go without any fuss, and our footprints needn't ever darken these floors again."

Something in the way he spoke the last words—a touch of quiet bitterness, softened by the unconscious comradeship which included the two of them in the same mood—made Bee look at him with sudden attention. His face was not only humorous and intelligent; it had about it a touch of wistfulness, mingled perhaps of a past happiness and a present need. There was

something very appealing about its look. She opened her lips to make some answer to its appeal—she didn't know exactly what.

Before the words could come, however, they were startled away by a sudden sharp disturbance in the dining room. Through the wide door from the hall rushed a girl, tall, brilliantly dressed, vividly handsome—Phil's sister beyond a shadow of doubt, carved from the same rich marble with the same diamond-tipped chisel. She was flashing with anger and excitement, and when, scattering the clustered lunchers like chaff, she had reached the middle of the room, she cried out:

"Lock the doors! Don't anybody move! There's a thief here!"

### III

THE girl's emotion was genuine, yet there hung about it a flavor of conscious picturesqueness, which showed in the way she took the center of the stage to make her announcement, the way she flung up her arm in the gesture of the Statue of Liberty. She was theatrical, thought Bee—too fully aware of her beauty and brilliance ever to be perfectly natural; and in that, thought Bee again, with a start of perception, she was also like Phil, who must always be the *Prince Charming*, magnificent and dazzling. It was strange that Bee had never quite realized that about Phil before!

The supers crowded about the star, squeaking and chattering.

"Oh, Lucille! Ooh, *Lucille!* What is it, Lucille? What's stolen? Your pearls—your mother's diamonds? Who did it? Oh, isn't it exciting? Oooh!"

"Be quiet, and let me explain!" cried the star, stamping her foot. "Somebody here did it, because it was done within the last twenty minutes, and nobody's left the house. It isn't jewelry, it isn't money, it's something more valuable. It's—the marquise's miniature!"

There ensued a stir and a chatter, some exclaiming because they knew all about it, and some because they knew nothing. Bee—her personal distress forgotten for the moment, in the excitement of the drama—was about to turn to her companion for enlightenment, but again her words were forestalled. There was another sudden incursion into the dining room, the new arrival being a woman of middle age, tall,

commanding, sumptuously clad, determinedly handsome, her eyes gleaming with decision and with love of power.

"One moment!" she said in a fine, schooled contralto voice, laying a hand on the girl's arm. "This is a most unfortunate affair, but every one must keep calm. Our most valuable possession, a miniature—an heirloom—has disappeared. Of course it will be found, but meantime—"

"There's only one thing to do!" interrupted the girl, flinging off the restraining hand with a violent movement. "Watch the doors, and search *everybody!* Phil's calling the police—they'll be here any minute—and none of you must *move!*"

There was another startled twitter among the guests, and several surged forward to protest. The hostess silenced them with a wave of her jeweled hand.

"Lucille is absurd," she pronounced. "We know that nearly every one here is a friend and a social equal. All we wish to do is to hunt out any outsiders who may have got in. Just stay where you are, please, until we pass you, and then go out by the front door. I will check up in the drawing-room, Phil in the hall, and Lucille here."

She moved out, with the demeanor of a stage queen terminating an audience, and the twitter augmented.

"Rather high-handed, I must say!"

"Oh, it's like their cheek!"

"What's all the shooting for, anyway?"

"Gracious, haven't you heard of the marquise's miniature? You would if you saw much of Lucille!"

"Marvelous old French work of art—gift of a titled admirer—only one of its kind—well, all I can say is, I pity anybody who crashed the gate to-day!"

These last words, catching Bee's ear, brought her back to self-consciousness with a shock. If there was anybody in the assembly who had crashed the gate, it was she; and if there was anybody who wanted to keep out of the way of the Loomis family—

She turned swiftly to the door that led to the hall; but here she was stopped by the haughty maid.

"Beg pardon, miss—no one is to go out this way," said the girl, with a crushing glance at the worn squirrel collar.

"They shall not pass," murmured Roger Kent, close beside Bee. "Better just stand pat. The less commotion you make, the

less they'll notice you—defensive tactics of the rabbit and the watermelon!"

She wondered, even in the midst of her perturbation, to find him so aware of her vulnerable position, and so kindly disposed in spite of his awareness. She thought she had never heard a voice as comforting as his; but his advice came too late. Her hasty movement toward the door had caught the hostile eye of the red-haired doll, which kindled with suspicion.

"Lucille, *Lucille!*" cried the doll shrilly. "That girl in gray, in the little room! She's been acting queer—now she's trying to get out—*watch* her!"

The star flashed into action. She swept through the crowd like a meteor.

"Come here, you in the gray!" she cried. "Come out—if you're not afraid!"

Bee was afraid, desperately afraid; but she turned toward Lucille, her hands clenched to keep from trembling, her red lips pressed tight together, her eyes brilliant and steady.

"What do you want of me?" she asked.

The meteor stopped short, and the two confronted each other. Everybody stared at them.

"I want to know who you are."

"My name is Beatrice Jamieson. I live in New York."

"And what are you doing here?"

"I came on Phil's invitation. He asked me to lunch and to go to the game with him."

"Ooh!" shrilled the red-haired girl. "What a lie! *I'm* going to the game with Phil! He never invited you at all!"

"Be quiet, Mitzi," commanded the daughter of the house. "I'm managing this. Phil! Phil, come here! Come here, I say!"

From the hall, shouldering through the crowded doorway with his debonair condescensions of apology and his flashing smile, came Phil, big, beautiful, conquering; and close behind him came the lady paramount, who evidently was not above the frailty of curiosity. For an instant the sight of the young man's tall grace and triumphant handsomeness made Bee's heart jump up suffocatingly, as it used to do; but when she saw the three of them side by side, arrayed in their conscious power and beauty—*Prince Charming, Princess Mirabelle*, the queen mother—some quality that they all had in common, some gross alloy that had nothing to do with

royalty, showed through the resplendent surface and dimmed all its glamour; and her heart settled quietly back into its habitat.

"Phil," said his sister, "here's a girl who says you invited her here. Do you know her?"

Phil looked at Bee, opened his lips, closed them, and swallowed hard. The smile fled from his face, leaving it sulky and sallow. There was a brief, tense, highly uncomfortable pause.

The queen mother broke it.

"Know her? Of course he doesn't know her! Who is the young person?" she said haughtily, and stared at Bee—believe it or not—through a lorgnette.

Bee met the stare with steady eyes, though her lips were white.

"He knows me very well," she answered quietly; "but that doesn't matter, because in the future I prefer not to know him. Good-by, Phil!"

She started to turn away.

"Here! Wait!" cried Lucille Loomis. "You can't get away with that! You've got to stand out and be searched! Mother—Phil—watch the doors! Give me your hand bag, girl!"

Bee hesitated. To have this royal family, after throwing her out of doors, detain her for the purpose of going through her pockets, seemed a little too much; yet she feared that to refuse compliance would be to brand herself with guilt. She stood still, very white and scornful—everybody staring at her except Phil Loomis, who had unostentatiously removed himself to the hall—and slowly she held out her bag to the young princess.

#### IV

At this moment, however, there was another disturbance. From the little room on which Bee had turned her back came the young man, Roger Kent, pushing his way purposefully through the crowd. He stopped at her side, and returned the royal stare with a level look.

"I think that will be about all, Lucille," he said in a quiet but resonant voice. "This lady, Miss Jamieson, did come on Phil's invitation, but she's also here with me. I waited to give Phil a chance to show himself a gentleman, but I realize now that I was too much of an optimist. I'll wait one minute longer for the three of you to apologize to Miss Jamieson."



There was another pause. The queen blinked rapidly, the princess gasped audibly once or twice, but apparently neither could command a voice, and Phil tactfully remained invisible.

"Another false alarm!" commented Roger Kent dispassionately. "I might have expected it. All right, Beatrice, we won't waste any more time."

He drew her hand through his arm and led her out, through the hall and through the front door. Nobody made any attempt to stop them, henchman and guests alike, apparently, having taken in the scene and drawn their own conclusions from it. It was an exit quite as impressive as the queen mother's, and considerably more final.

Expertly threading through side streets and short cuts, he conducted her out of the little college town, and in a few minutes they stopped in the shelter of a copse beside a country road.

"There!" he said. "Now it's all left behind. Nothing to do but take a few deep breaths of this good ozone and puff out the memory of it!"

He smiled at her; and the sight of his nice smile—understanding, reassuring, tender—chased away the self-control to which she had been holding on with tight lips all the way. The long weeks of misgiving, the long day of suspense and disillusionment, the public ordeal, had left her tense and quivering; and now that Roger Kent's smile broke down her pride she wanted nothing so much as to cry. She could not speak, but she looked at him with a quivering lip.

"Why, that's a good idea!" he said, with his remarkable perceptiveness. "I believe tears would wash it out better than ozone. Won't you make use of my shoulder? It may not be as broad as Phil's, but I promise you it's a lot stronger."

As he spoke, he sat down on a pine-needly bank, drew her down beside him, and put a protecting arm around her; and in less time than it takes to tell it, she was crying, in the most delicious and satisfying comfort, on his nice rough shoulder. She cried softly, without sobs; and all the strain, all the soreness of heart, all the humiliation, seemed to dissolve and flow away in the quiet stream of her tears.

"That's the stuff!" said Roger, patting her shoulder tenderly. "Nothing like a good cry, they tell me, to square up ac-

counts and pay the check. Not that Phil's worth a single one of your tears—the skunk!"

"Oh, I'm not c-crying for him," explained Bee. "I'm just—just crying. How did you m-make them all give way to you? I think you're w-wonderful! Did you ever hear of their old miniature?"

Roger frowned.

"Yes! Yes, I've heard of it."

"T-tell me about it. I'm not a very good c-conversationalist when I'm c-crying."

"You're a darling, whatever you're doing!" the young man remarked with conviction. "All right, I'll tell you. It's really something very special—a portrait of the Marquise de Maine done by a great artist of the seventeenth century. She had a lover, whom she couldn't marry because he was an Englishman and a heretic. She gave it to him, and it came down in his family as their greatest treasure. Every son had to swear that he'd never sell it, and never give it to any one but the woman he married; and it grew quite famous, because it was very beautiful and literally beyond price. Finally it came to a chap here in college, who hadn't much of anything else. Lucille Loomis heard about it, and because it was the one thing money couldn't buy, she had to have it. She made the poor nut believe that she loved him, and they got engaged. Then he gave her the miniature, of course; and then—she broke the engagement."

"Oh!" exclaimed Bee. "What a beastly cad!"

"It runs in the family," said Roger firmly. "Well, it wasn't long before he realized that he was out nothing but the miniature, but of course he wanted that back; it's to be given only to the woman the chap marries, you see. So he wrote to her—he was out of college by that time—and asked for it. She answered that it was lost. He didn't believe her; and a couple of days ago some one told him it was posing as a family treasure in her mother's showiest drawing-room. So—I give you ten guesses what he did next."

"Gracious!" Bee sat up, dry-eyed. "I suppose he sent the bailiffs and sheriffs and things after them; but what if it really was stolen to-day? Will they have to go to jail?"

Roger Kent looked at her, as she sat gazing at him with bated breath.

"Why, she's stopped crying!" he said. Taking out a big, soft handkerchief, he wiped her cheeks carefully. "What pretty cheeks!" he remarked. "The color doesn't come off one bit."

"But tell me," persisted Bee, "do you think they hid it themselves, and raised an alarm to put the police off? Can the poor man have them searched? If it's really stolen, can he ever get it again?"

"Oh, that's all right! I have it in my pocket." He fished it out and laid it in her hand. "You see," he explained, "it's my miniature."

"Oh!" cried Bee, her breath quite taken away. "And you went and took it yourself—right under the noses of those haughty grabbers! Oh, I think you're marvelous!"

"I'd like to tell you, at your convenience, what I think you are," said Roger Kent huskily, looking at her with all his eyes.

His tone was so pointedly personal that Bee's vanished breath came back again at an accelerated rate, and she dropped her eyes quickly to the miniature. It was truly a beautiful thing—framed in gold and pearls, the face of a sensitive, noble wom-

an, with high-piled powdered hair and jewels wrought upon the painted ivory with the exquisite microscopic skill of the master miniaturist.

"Why, she's the loveliest thing I ever saw!" the girl exclaimed, entranced.

"She's not half as lovely as you," said Roger Kent in a low voice. "Do you know what you made me think of, standing up there alone before all those cats' eyes? You reminded me of the princess in the fairy tale, who comes disguised to the palace and finds pretenders on the throne, and who's so royal that her true rank can't help showing through all the rags she wears."

"You're—you're very nice!" said Bee; and she looked at him starry-eyed for a minute of silence. Then she added hastily: "Here—I must give the miniature back to you, before anything more happens to it."

"Oh, the miniature!" said Roger Kent, dropping his hand over hers that held it. "Well, if it's all the same to you, Miss Beatrice Jamieson, I wish you wouldn't bother about giving it back. The owner has a hunch that it's in the right place now!"

### THE POET'S SONG

A POET out of nothing built a rime—

Of seeming nothing but a fancy wrought

From dreaming words born of an idle thought;  
And yet somehow that song went on through time.

Men sang it at their work; its magic chime

The wonder of the generations caught.

Men spoke its words in foreign lands, and met

Again the things the soul must not forget;

Although the critics tore it bit from bit,

Hearts that seemed dead were waked to life by it;

And in it love a sanctuary kept,

And through it honor roused, that long had slept.

As if by hungry hearts for ages sought,

Its mystic words discovered truths sublime,

And grew the text of nations. Young men wooed

Their sweethearts with it. Anger sheathed the knife,

Gave hand in friendship; weakness stood up, strong;

It brought declining age bright certitude

That death swung gates into a greater life—

It is no longer called an idle song!

Harry Kemp

# A Proud Man in Tarpaulins

SALMON, SEALS, AND SIWASH SPELLS FIGURE IN THIS PLEASANT ROMANCE OF PUGET SOUND

By Herman Howard Matteson

WIND and tide and two strong arms had borne Pred Banks swiftly since a wandering beach comber had told him the evil tidings. Leaving an untasted supper cooking over the camp fire, he had climbed into his dory on Saturna Island and started for Smetook Island, twenty miles away. Pred was engaged in killing seals, that gravest menace to the salmon industry, for the cannery's association. On the beach he left a pile of dead seals upon which, now, he would never collect the bounty.

It was nearly midnight when he reached Smetook Island and beached his dory. Entering a little used trail, with which he seemed to be familiar, he swiftly traversed the forest of giant cedars and towering firs. Presently, for Smetook was a small island, containing no more than two or three hundred acres, the trail opened into a clearing where stood a neat cabin. A light gleamed from a window.

Very cautiously Pred crossed the clearing and came to a stop a few steps from the window of the cabin. Within, a large horsehide-covered portmanteau, studded with brass nails, stood upon a chair. The curtains had been taken down, and several neatly wrapped bundles were piled upon a table. Obviously, the occupant of the cabin was making ready to leave.

This occupant, a girl in her early twenties, sat with her head buried in her arms, which rested upon the table. Racking sobs shook her slender body. A very old Siwash Indian, his skin as harsh and weathered as a worn boot, stood beside her, awkwardly patting her shoulder with a withered claw of a hand.

It was apparent to the watcher standing outside in the darkness that the old Siwash was urging the girl to do some particular

thing, or to refrain from some intended action. He took the horsehide portmanteau from the chair, crossed the floor, and opened a door into an adjoining room. Now it was plain enough. Naha Ellison, the girl, had made ready to leave the island, and the old native was urging her to remain. He had taken the big old grip and had put it back in her bedroom.

Naha lifted a tear-stained face, nodded her head, and rose from the chair. She had agreed to stay, for awhile at least. The Indian grinned horribly, waved his hands exultantly, backed out of the cabin, and closed the door. He was on the point of thrusting off a dugout canoe, when a hand fell upon his shoulder.

"Listen, Chutchin! Talk soft—I don't want her to hear that's in the cabin. Remember me? I'm Pred Banks. You made bark boats for me twenty year ago, when I was a kid. It's three year ago now that I left this island. Remember me?"

Old Chutchin leaned and peered into the face of Pred Banks.

"I *cumtux*," he said. "I remember. You are a fool! You have too much pride for a man that wears tarpaulin pants. You ran away three years ago. If you had stayed here, where you belong, this thing would never have happened. You are a fool! It's you that brought ruin on Naha Ellison."

"Maybe so," agreed Pred humbly. "I just dassent let her know I'm here, Chut," he went on, jerking his head in the direction of the cabin. "You swear you won't tell her, or nobody. Swear it!"

Solemnly the old Siwash lifted his spread palms to the young moon and swore that he would reveal to no one the presence of Pred Banks on Smetook Island.

"Now, Chut," said Pred, "you take and

spread the log. Tell me exact what happened to Naha, and how—all about it."

"You are a fool!" repeated Chutchin stoutly. "If you had stayed here, married the white girl, this would not have happened. Now maybe it is too late. She that was rich, now she is almost a pauper. She was going away from here forever. I urged her to stay. I swore to her that I would work a spell, a *musatchie* charm, that would get her back the thing that Kapswalla Lane stole from her. I swore it. I—I just can't fail her, although so far I have failed."

"Hold hard a minute, Chut! Let's get all clear. From the very beginning now, read me out the chart."

"Three years ago, because you are a fool, you left this island, to go and kill seals for the association. You—"

"Belay a second, Chut! Maybe I was a fool. I'd worked on the salmon trap for Naha's father. He died. Then she was rich, for the trap was hers. I was poor. I kind of felt the difference, her being rich and me poor. She kind of let me know there was a difference when she'd fell heir to the best salmon trap in Puget Sound. I did go away. What of that?"

"Right away, Kapswalla Lane—the Indians named him Kapswalla because he is a thief—he began his scheme. He wanted Naha to marry him. No, she would not. Kapswalla Lane began to work his plans. For three years he has worked them, and now he has won. Yesterday Naha Ellison, she sign a law paper, a *pehpeh tzum*, and now the fish trap site is his."

"But why did she have to sign away the trap? That's what gets me."

"Because Kapswalla Lane made her afraid. Night and day he made her afraid till she go nearly *pelton*—what white man call crazy. For three years Kapswalla and his fellow thieves, they pirate her trap, slash the webbing, steal the fish. Night times, when she is alone, here in the cabin, or in the watch shanty on the trap, some one comes. There is scratching at the windows. She knows that some one always listens and watches her. The greatest fear is that which comes when one knows not what he fears. When she walks along the trail, something rustles in the bushes. When she would sleep, something rubs against the cabin walls or falls upon the roof. The doors creak, the windows rattle. Some one tosses a dead crow into the spring where

she gets her drinking water. On her pillow, when she enters her room, she finds two sticks crossed—and that is a death warning, as everybody knows. Night and day Kapswalla has followed her, made her afraid, until—"

"You're right, Chutchin—I was a fool to go away! But now I am here. Where is Kapswalla Lane?"

"Which proves again that you are a fool," said the old Indian. "I have thought of that. What good to kill Kapswalla Lane? Those of his blood and kin would get the trap. No, no!"

"Killing is too good for him; still, maybe killing him wouldn't do no good. Just the same, I aim to do something, without ever letting her know I done it. I suppose Kapswalla sleeps on the trap, in the watch shanty. I aim to do something, and do it sudden. Just leave me take your canoe a minute, Chutchin."

"No, not now. Hear what I have to say." The shriveled claw of the old Siwash clutched itself into the thick, hard arm of Pred Banks. "I have sworn a strong *musatchie* to get Naha back her trap. So far I have failed; but I will not fail, if you that come so late and are so bold will help!"

"*Musatchie!*" snorted Pred with infinite disgust. "You stand there and try to tell me that any Indian hocus-pocus of a spell will make Kapswalla Lane give that trap back to Naha? *Poolie!* You're foolisher than a geek bird!"

"So far I fail," continued Chutchin evenly; "but I will not fail now that you are here to help. The strong *musatchie*, if it is done by the rule, never fails. It has never failed since Deaub, the Indian spirit of dark, sank into the sea a million years ago."

"Well," said Pred impatiently, "roll your little game! What's this strong hocus-pocus, and how do you work it?"

"Because I am old and weak, and Kapswalla is young and strong and fierce, I have so far failed. Now you are here, Pred Banks—you who are said to surpass a bear in strength. Where I failed, you will win—that is, you will will if you have a heart of courage."

"What is it I got to do? I don't feel so plumb terrified. What is it I got to do?"

"This is the strong *musatchie* that never fails—when the moon is young, if I float



a chip of the blood bush tree across the narrow pass where the fish swim through, and say three times the black devil prayer, no salmon fish will ever again swim into the trap that Kapswalla Lane stole from Naha Ellison."

"Then why hain't you worked it, Chutchin? A man's got to be terrible light in the tops that believes junk like that. Why hain't you worked your *musatchie*, if it's such a cinch?"

"Wait! To say the devil prayers and to float the chip of the blood bush tree is not enough. Upon that chip must rest three hairs taken from the head of Kapswalla Lane, shriveled in the fire and laid upon the chip with a black prayer for every hair. Twice now I have stolen out to the trap. The first time, just as I was about to snatch the hairs from the head of the sleeping man, he awakened and fired at me with a big gun. Again I tried it. He seized me in his grab hook hands, beat me, and kicked me off the spiller into the swirling tide. Twice I have tried—and failed."

Pred Banks was pacing back and forth upon the sands, his head bent in thought.

"How you know that, even if your hocus-pocus did stop the fish, Kapswalla would blow back the trap to Naha? How you know it?"

"I know it because he is a coward, and has an evil heart. For three years now, while he has been slashing Naha's webbing, pirating the fish, following her through the woods, I have faced him, said my Indian curses, and watched his face grow fish-belly white, his hands twitch, his eyes look like those of a cornered wolf. He is afraid! If I can make just one spell come to pass, he will know that the ban is beginning to work, that he will sicken and die miserably unless he gives Naha back the trap."

"You figure your hocus-pocus will make the fish quit, and then he'll blow back with the trap? All you need is three hairs out of Kapswalla's head to make the charm stick?"

"I know it," answered the Indian gravely. "The fish will stop. His heart will sicken, his bones will ache, and his eyes will grow cold in their holes. Death will be stalking Kapswalla Lane, and he will know it, for I have told him. Rather than die miserably and rot, he will give Naha back her trap—I know it!"

"All right," answered Pred. "I may be gone quite awhile, maneuvering around and

so forth, but you camp down here and wait. I'll caper out and I'll collect them three hairs or start a seam. You wait right here."

Pred started down the beach, but stopped.

"You swear, Chut, you'll never, never tell Naha I come sneaking back like a sick porpoise pup! I don't want her ever to know I had a hand in this. You swear it, Chut!"

Gravely Chutchin spread his palms to the young moon and swore again that he would never, never tell Naha Ellison that a fool proud man in tarpaulin pants had come back to Smetook Island to help her.

## II

For some time Pred prowled about the far beach where he had left his dory. He shoved off in the darkness, and made out into the open. A few moments later, a sound was heard as of distant shots. Still later—an hour later, in fact—Pred Banks drove his boat up beside the fish trap that had been Naha Ellison's.

When the dory came up beside the pot and heart of the trap—the inclosure into which the fish blunder when following the lead—he rested upon his oars. Incessantly the wire webbing shook and rattled. The big Tyee salmon, weighing thirty, fifty, even seventy-five pounds, were thudding ineffectual snouts against the web in their search for escape. Inevitably the fish would find the tunnel and swim into the spiller of the trap, from which, eventually, they would be brailed and loaded into a pot scow. Naha's stolen trap was taking fish—hundreds of dollars' worth every hour.

For a moment Pred sat in the dory peering into the phosphorescence caused by the threshing of the salmon. He gave the oars a touch, brought the dory up beside the ladder leading to the watch deck, cast the painter about a rung, and mounted to the top.

With catlike tread he crossed the creaking planks, and plastered his ear against the thin board wall of the watch shanty. Kapswalla Lane slept as swinishly as he lived, with gross gruntings and snorings.

Pred lifted the latch and opened the door.

"Who there?" Instantly the troubled conscience of Kapswalla Lane had put him on guard. "Who there? Answer, quick!"

Pred could hear Kapswalla fumbling

about for a flash light, or perhaps for a gun. Hesitating not an instant, making no reply whatever, he hurled himself toward the bunk where the trap thief lay.

Almost Pred lost the fight before it began. As he dived into the bunk, his head struck the top of Kapswalla's bullet head. Dazed, Pred clung desperately, trying to locate a telling hold that he might sustain until his wits cleared. With enormous strength, amplified by the terror that struck in upon his guilty soul, Kapswalla fought free and hurled Pred out of the bunk upon the floor.

Then, in utter darkness, the battle began, a score of wild flailing blows fanning the air for every one that struck. Aware that he was fighting a madman, Pred rushed recklessly. He must bring the conflict to close quarters. Any instant one of his antagonist's tremendous swings might knock him senseless.

The pine board shanty rocked with the terrific threshing of the combatants as they fought there in the darkness, gouging, striking, clinching, rolling upon the floor like fighting dogs. A table went over with a crash. The kerosene wall lamp fell, dousing the two with oil and strewing the floor with razor-sharp bits of glass. The tin stove toppled from its brick supports, and the pipe fell over, showering down soot no blacker than the interior of the shack.

Presently Pred got a hold, for he had clung to the one purpose of fighting in close, hanging on like a bulldog once he got a grip. Burying his face in Lane's breast, he hung on with one hand, while his other fist hammered away at the trap thief's jaw, neck, and ribs.

Maddened by this punishment, Lane tore out of his enemy's embrace and flung Pred to the floor. He buried the smaller man beneath his vast bulk while he tried to locate Pred's throat.

Presently his great splay hand settled over Pred's face. The thick fingers slid to his chin, throatward. Pred sank his teeth in Lane's thumb, gave a wolfish tear, and twisted his head aside, just as a ponderous fist crashed on the floor where, the instant before, there had been a head.

Both men were upon their feet. Again they clinched and fell, this time upon the bunk. Two legs of the contrivance gave away, spilling the fighters back upon the floor.

Now it became apparent to Pred Banks

that Lane was fighting more to get away than anything else; and in the darkness the fish thief did get clear. Pred could hear him fumbling along the wall. A gun—Kapswalla was hunting for a gun!

Pred jounced down upon his knees, fumbled about, located a leg of the bunk, twisted it free and swung it, just as Lane came lurching back toward him. The bit of fir timber thudded dully upon the thief's head in the exact instant that a needle of red-hot agony pierced Pred's thigh. Lane had snatched a fish sliming knife from the wall, and had plunged it into Pred's thigh just as the bang of the wooden bed leg had piled him a huddled, unconscious heap in the corner.

Pred could feel the hot blood pouring down his leg. For just an instant his head swam. This would never do—to faint away, to lose the fight in the instant of victory! Clutching the wound with one hand, he fumbled about, tore a handful of hair from Lane's thick mat, staggered out of the shanty, and half fell down the ladder into his dory.

Sculling the dory with one oar, Pred made the shore.

"Here, Chut!" he said, his voice wabbly and weak. "I got her! Likewise I got stuck. I'll have to lay hove to back in the woods for a spell, to get this stab hole plugged up before I can travel. Don't tell Naha nothing. You'll find me back in the woods. Might fetch me some *muckamuck* when it gets daylight. Now you do your stuff—say your strong *musatchie*. If you do, I think like you do, there won't come a fish into that trap for quite a spell. Here you be!"

In old Chutchin's outstretched hand Pred Banks laid a whole handful of blood-matted hair from the head of Kapswalla Lane.

### III

In the very early morning Chutchin began to work his magic spell. Three hairs from the head of Kapswalla Lane he shriveled by touching them to a glowing coal. These shriveled hairs he laid upon a chip split from a blood bush tree. As the old Siwash launched the tiny but fateful ship upon the tide, he waved his arms to east, west, south, and north, calling upon his savage gods to consummate the curse:

"No more shall fish come to the trap of the thief! Let the spot sickness and ach-

ing of bones come upon Kapswalla Lane until he gives back the thing he stole! Turn the blood of his heart to cowardly water! Let his eyes grow dim and his hand shake! Let food be ashes upon his lips! Let him sicken and suffer and miserably die, the thief Kapswalla Lane!"

At sunrise, to humor the old native, Naha Ellison got into the canoe with Chutchin and suffered him to paddle out beside the spiller of the trap. Standing upon the watch deck was Kapswalla Lane, his face battered into a purple, pulpy mass. As if oblivious of the object of his imprecation, Chutchin stood erect in the canoe and repeated the curse:

"Let his eyes grow dim and his hand shake! Let him sicken and suffer and miserably die!"

Not a word uttered Kapswalla Lane. He stood staring through swollen lids at old Chutchin. Never for an instant suspecting that it had not been Chutchin who had made this third and successful attack upon him in the darkness of night, Lane began to wonder—and to fear. There was something devilish and spooky about the business. There was blood all over the watch shanty floor—Chutchin's blood; and yet here was the old Indian, without a mark of conflict, his arms outspread, calling down curses upon the head of the trap thief!

Naha, sitting in the stern of the canoe, was looking sharply along the lead of the trap. She picked up a paddle and threw the canoe in closer. Her hands clinging to the webbing, she peered down into the depths of the spiller. Her eyes widened, her lips parted, and her breathing quickened.

A few hours before, in almost solid phalanx, the great Tyee salmon had been breasting the web and pouring in an unbroken file through the tunnels. No longer was there a rattling of the web, no longer a swirling in the depths of pot and heart. The strong *musatchie* of old Chutchin had done its work, for not a single fish was swimming into the trap that Lane had stolen from her!

Naha glanced up to meet the guilty, troubled gaze of Kapswalla Lane. He, too, had made the discovery that the fish were coming no longer. His face, despite its bruises, had turned gray. He turned and staggered toward the shanty.

All day, at intervals, Chutchin put back

beside the trap in his canoe. Again and again he stood erect, spread out his arms, and spoke his *musatchie*, conjuring the fish to come no more, and calling sickness, disaster, and death to descend upon Kapswalla Lane; and not a single salmon entered the spiller of the trap that day.

At sundown Naha insisted upon Chutchin coming to her cabin for a bite of food. The old man refused. A medicine man may neither eat nor drink while he is working a *musatchie* spell.

"No," he said stubbornly. "Until Kapswalla Lane signs to you a *pehpeh tzum*—a paper giving you back the trap—I will neither eat nor drink."

Naha prepared a lunch, wrapped it up in a white cloth, and insisted upon the Siwash taking it with him. He could eat it, she told him, with a smile that was not altogether a mocking one, when Kapswalla Lane should signify his willingness to restore the trap.

All night the old Indian kept his vigil. At hourly intervals Lane, groaning upon his bunk, heard the droning voice of the medicine man reiterating his curses. Kapswalla's coward heart began to feel the growing pangs of fear. Tentatively he felt over his huge body. His bones had begun to ache. His eyes felt dry and cold. His food had turned to ashes upon his swollen lips. He began to feel feverish. The deadly spot sickness, Lane knew, that Chutchin was calling down upon him, came on with fever and bone ache. He was suffering. He was sick. He was going to die!

Howling imprecations, Kapswalla Lane ran out upon the deck and emptied a six-shooter into the air; but Chutchin kept on unperturbed, droning his incantation:

"Let him suffer and miserably die!"

At sunrise Lane, shaking, nervous, stood upon the deck. When he saw Chutchin putting off from shore, he waved to the Siwash to come beside the ladder of the spiller.

"Look, Chut!" said Lane, wringing his hands nervously. "I'm a mighty sick man. I hain't slept a wink, nor et a bite. You wouldn't murder a man for just a trap? Call off that devil spell, Chut! You wouldn't make a man die for just a trap?"

"You sign a *pehpeh tzum*, Kapswalla Lane? See, not a Tyee swims the lead. You a sick man, Kapswalla Lane. Your bones ache. You sick, you die now maybe pretty soon. You sign a *pehpeh tzum*?"

"Yes!" shouted Lane hoarsely. "Fetch it here—I'll sign!"

An hour later Naha and Chutchin climbed the ladder. Naha placed in Lane's quaking hand the miserable pittance of money that he had given her to make the transfer of the trap legal. Lane scrawled his signature, and Chutchin witnessed it with his mark, a picture of the thunder-bird. Lane got his things into a dory and rowed away toward the east, and Naha Ellison never saw him again.

#### IV

It was pitiful to observe the agony of the old Siwash when, after hours of earnest prayer and supplication to his gods, the fish failed to return to Naha's trap. Not a fish, not a single one!

Naha tried to comfort him.

"They'll come back, Chutchin. Don't worry!"

But Chutchin did worry. Something had gone amiss with his strong *musatchie*. Ah, that was it—the *musatchie* had been too strong! Naïvely he explained that while the spell called for three hairs from the head of the victim, he had had a whole handful. The fish might come again, but it would be a long, long time.

Naha studied the old fellow. Surveying the havoc occasioned by the nocturnal battle in the cabin, she shook her head. This feeble old Indian had never, never put up such a tremendous fight against the young and vigorous Kapswalla Lane. There was something strange about the whole business.

Naha was no great believer in Indian spells. That the fish had failed to come, that Kapswalla Lane, terrified, had signed back the trap—these were incontrovertible facts. Chutchin evidently believed that his *musatchie* had caused it all, and there could be no doubt concerning the old man's honesty. Still—

As Chutchin refused to leave the trap—where, he said, he must still continue prayer and vigil until the fish returned—Naha got into the canoe and paddled ashore. Upon the beach she discovered some footprints. She got back into the canoe and paddled slowly along the shore.

At the far end of the island she found other footprints, and the keel marks of a dory that had been drawn up, thrust off, drawn up again, and once more shoved back into the water.

She walked into the wood, following a route marked by a fern broken down here, a branch of an alder lopping there. In a sheltered place beneath a tree, the grass was padded flat. Blankets had been spread here.

In the thick grass to one side she picked up a bloody cloth. That cloth—she could have identified it among a thousand—was the cloth in which she had wrapped a lunch for Chutchin. Some one, wounded, had used the cloth for a bandage.

Her head bent upon her bosom, she walked back, got into the canoe, and paddled straight to the narrow pass through which the salmon swam toward her trap. This pass, very deep, was no more than thirty feet across at high tide.

Back paddling, for the current was swift, she peered down into the crystal depths of the water. She gave a start, exclaimed, and then laughed aloud.

Here was the secret of the strong *musatchie*. Five dead seals—the terror of salmon—were swinging as natural as life in the current, anchored by the tail fins with ropes fast to rock anchors.

In the canoe was Chutchin's hunting knife. Naha reached down into the water and slashed the lines, one after another. The dead seals floated away with the current.

Slowly Naha paddled back toward her cabin. This was no trick of Chutchin's. Certainly the old man had no knowledge of the presence in the pass of the five dead seals that had broken up the run and sent the startled fish swimming down another shore. Very well, to the end, she would never reveal to him the fact that his magic had been a joke.

But who had anchored the dead seals? Why, whoever had fought Kapswalla Lane, had been wounded, and had camped in the woods—that man had planted the dead seals that had made the *musatchie* work.

Naha drew the canoe up on the bank before her cabin, and began pacing back and forth. Who had anchored the dead seals?

For some minutes Chutchin had been shouting wildly to her from the trap; but she paid no attention, walking back and forth, back and forth. Who had anchored the dead seals?

Some one who knew seals and knew salmon, some one who knew that on a certain black rock, a mile off shore, any night a



dozen seals hauled out to sleep. Who would know all this? Why, Pred Banks, her old playmate, her *tillicum*, her lover—Pred Banks, who had gone away because he was insanely proud—he knew all this!

Naha got into the canoe and paddled out to the trap.

"Look!" screamed Chutchin exultantly. "Look! The salmon have come again!"

The wire webbing of pot, heart, and speller was banging and rattling with the rush of the returning giant Tyees.

"Fine!" she exclaimed. "Your *musatchie* worked, Chutchin. Fine!" She smiled up at the old Indian. "I have been thinking. This trap is too much for a girl. I have been thinking." Narrowly she was watching the old man's face. "I have been thinking. Do you remember Pred Banks, Chutchin? I am wondering if I could get him to come and take charge of the trap

for me. I haven't seen him for three years. Have you? Do you know where I could find him?"

Chutchin opened and closed his lips like the gills of a dying fish. He looked everywhere but at Naha.

"He kill seals," the old Siwash finally replied. "He has a camp on Saturna Island that is twenty miles away."

Without trusting himself to look Naha in the face, Chutchin pointed in the direction of Pred's island.

"I don't in the least mind a paddle of twenty miles, or forty, to see an old *tillicum*," she said, her voice vibrant with emotion. "I'll just borrow your canoe, if you don't mind, Chut. You stay on the trap until I—until we get back. I'll do you up a lunch and fetch it out."

Naha brought out the lunch to Chutchin and then headed her canoe to the westward, toward Saturna Island.

#### EASTER IN GALILEE

Ah, but the spring is good to see  
High on the hills of Galilee!  
On Esdraelon's plain below  
Poppies shimmer and poppies glow;  
The lupin flings the blue of its dye  
Back to the blue of the leaning sky;  
The lift and fall of the camel bell  
Comes as the breezes sink or swell;  
All of the earth is fair to see  
High on the hills of Galilee.

In the little town of Nazareth  
Life goes on with no hint of death:  
The wandering one-stringed minstrel wends  
Through the streets till the daylight ends;  
The maids still poise their water jars  
At the Virgin's Well ere the peer of stars;  
From the bazaars the fragrant scent  
Of sandalwood is with attar blent;  
Ah, but the spring is good to see  
High on the hills of Galilee!

Up from Sidon and up from Tyre  
Soft winds blow like the sound of a lyre;  
Down by Cana the waves of grass  
Sweep toward the walls of Tiberias,  
And a wealth of oleanders make  
A girdle of bloom for the gleaming lake;  
While over all this loveliness  
Remains His name as a boon to bless—  
His ever precious memory  
High on the hills of Galilee!

Clinton Scollard

# Cupid Slips

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A MOST APPROPRIATE MATCH FOR THE  
GOOD MINISTER AND THE WEALTHY WIDOW, BUT.  
ALAS, THINGS WENT CRUELLY WRONG

By Andy Andrews

"THE meenister wull be eatin' here the night," observed Donald McAskill to Cremona, the colored cook at Mrs. Craigie's fashionable West Philadelphia boarding house.

"What he say, mis'?" asked Cremona of her mistress.

Mrs. Craigie, who was helping Cremona to prepare dinner, scented gossip and decided not to translate. She had hired Donald as handy man, partly in the hope that the addition of a male Nordic to her retinue of African females might help to check the infamous discussions of her boarders that went on below stairs.

"What made you say that, Donald?" she asked, fairly certain that the reply would be unintelligible to Cremona.

"Yon wumman's bidin' by the front window."

The slight smile that played in Mrs. Craigie's eyes gave evidence that she, too, had noticed the growing inclination of Mrs. Stopworth Giggs to be the first to greet the Rev. John Wilkie on his visits to the boarding house, where he had several parishioners, Donald among them. She may also have noticed that the young minister's calls were becoming more frequent since the well-to-do widow had made the boarding house her domicile.

"You mustn't talk about the guests, Donald," she admonished him mildly, and proceeded upstairs to the dining room.

"Sh'uldn't talk nohow," added the baffled Cremona, when her mistress had gone, "less'n yo' talk Americum!"

Donald, with the taciturnity of his race, said nothing. He dislodged the grime of various odd jobs in the kitchen sink, examined his reddish, angular countenance in the grubby bit of mirror that hung beside

the window, and ran a pocket comb through a thatch of sandy hair. Then he put on the white jacket in which he assisted with the serving of dinner.

When his toilet was finished, Cremona—still brooding, apparently, on her recent expulsion from the conversation—asked him:

"Whaffor you talk thataway, anyhow? Where is yo' frum?"

"Glesga," replied Donald.

The manner in which a son of Glasgow pronounces the name of his birthplace has no parallel in simple pride and quiet dignity.

"Ain't never heard of it," said the ignorant Cremona. "Heah, take dis soup on up."

When Donald reached the dining room, he noticed that the Rev. Mr. Wilkie had seated himself beside the Widow Giggs; or perhaps it was *vice versa*. On second thought, Donald was certain that it was *vice versa*, for he had a very low regard for Mrs. Stopworth Giggs. The feeling was perhaps unreasonable, but it was founded on an equally illogical trait which he had discovered in her.

Mrs. Giggs never endowed with a distinct human personality any one whom she did not know socially. To her, a servant was a servant, just as a chair is a chair. She looked around such people, or over them, or through them, but never *at* them. As Donald served the soup, she remarked to the place where he stood:

"Mr. Wilkie would like more water."

"Yes, if you please," added the young minister pleasantly, his blue eyes exuding as kindly a light as very thick-lensed spectacles would permit.

Donald filled Mr. Wilkie's tumbler, and,

in doing so, managed by carefully manipulated carelessness to upset the widow's glass into her lap. It was nearly full of ice-cold water.

"You clumsy lout!" she wailed, mopping furiously but with little effect at the clammy mess with her napkin. "I shall ask Mrs. Craigie to discharge you!"

Had Mrs. Giggs been better versed in the history of the dour race that had bred the McAskills, she would have hesitated at threatening a member of it, whatever the provocation. Even as the spilled water soaked gradually through her various garments, so did her angry words percolate into the craggy fastness of Donald's brain. With the same singleness of purpose that had made his ancestors invincible on the battlefield, he began to hate her.

Truly Gaelic in its thoroughness was this hate. It began at her abundance of elaborately marcelled golden hair, and took in her fat, babylike face with its succession of sagging chins. From there it traveled over pudgy arms and ample bosom; and, although this was all that Donald could see above the table, the hate extended right down to the incredibly small shoes into which she somehow managed to squeeze her feet.

Although his mind seethed, the old Scotsman held his peace, and the rest of the meal passed without incident. It was not until later in the evening, when the dinner dishes had been washed and put away, that his outraged feelings overcame his normal taciturnity. Invading the kitchen in search of an auditor, he found Cremona finishing a few preparations for the morning, prior to retiring. Although he was keenly conscious of the lingual gap between Cremona and himself, there was no one else; so he remarked by way of opening:

"'Tis peetifu'!"

"Lawzee, man!" she protested. "I kain't unnerstand 'at tongue-tied talk of yourn!"

"Ye ken the meenister?" asked Donald, speaking very slowly, and, as he thought, distinctly.

Cremona caught the word "minister."

"Yass?" she encouraged.

"Weel," Donald went on, "yon Mistress Giggs is thinkin' to hae him fur a husband."

"Ain't it the trufe?" agreed Cremona, catching the drift of the remark.

"But she wullna!"

"Uh?"

"She wullna!" repeated Donald in a louder voice. "She'll nae hae him. Her wicked designs on the puir man 'll be stoppit if I hae to bash her in the neb!"

His flashing eyes displayed no shame at the threat of striking a lady on the nose—a lady whose only crime was the refusal to harbor, without protest, a glass of iced water in her lap. The truth of the matter is that Donald had practically forgotten the water incident. Like many another with equally base motives, he had sought and found, to his own prejudiced satisfaction, a spiritual justification for his utterly unwarranted hate.

"She's a Jezebel!" he falsely accused the respectable Mrs. Giggs. "The puir wean o' a meenister disna ken her rale natur'."

Without actually understanding any of the words, Cremona sensed the negative trend of the argument, and was mystified at Donald's opposition to the budding romance. Although she was past forty herself, and no swain had yet appeared to plead for her ebon hand, this she knew to be an oversight, certain to be rectified eventually. There was no reason for resentment toward others, and of course she was totally incapable of understanding the austere Calvinism that Donald now invoked against the widow.

She gave him a warning which, if slightly careless in the matter of color distinction, was good advice, nevertheless. It is a pity he did not heed it.

"Big boy," she told him in her most serious tone, "you'd bettah keep out'n white folks' affairs."

## II

PEOPLE over thirty years of age are not at their best on picnics, and the Widow Giggs knew it. It was the prospect of a whole day with the Rev. Mr. Wilkie, with only the amiable Mrs. Craigie for chaperon, that stifled her misgivings. She even agreed to the inclusion of Donald as bearer of burdens, entirely unsuspecting the extent of his balefulness. Her awakening—her terrible awakening—came toward the middle of the afternoon.

The right bank of the Wissahickon Creek had been selected as the scene of the outing, and the party, up to and including luncheon, had been a complete success.

•Slightly surfeited with food, Mrs. Giggs now sat in the cool shadow of a tree and watched Donald as he cleared away the debris of the meal. The Rev. Mr. Wilkie, who was tactfully bestowing a little attention on the chaperon, had accompanied her on a short walk up the creek. Ineffable peace reigned.

But despite the quietude and sylvan beauty of her surroundings, the widow was not enjoying herself. She had come to be with Mr. Wilkie, not to look at scenery, and his absence distressed her. Somewhat aimlessly, she arose from the mossy shade where she had been sitting and strolled over to the bank of the brook. There she saw, stretching enticingly before her, a crossing made of large stones placed in the water at intervals of two or three feet.

At her age, no doubt, the thought of venturing across this treacherous bridge was a foolish one; but who has not, on a picnic, experienced a renewed youthfulness of mind, with its deceptive illusion of an equally rejuvenated body? Gracefully, almost daintily, considering her size, Mrs. Giggs stepped out on the first rock of the crossing. There she stood for a moment, experiencing a delicious tremor of adventure. Then she negotiated the next step, and the next. It was not difficult.

At the fourth rock, which was about midstream, she paused. Perhaps it was some psychic warning. More probably her indecision was due to the fact that the swiftly flowing water had almost submerged the fifth rock, and had made it slippery.

Her hesitation, however, was but momentary. With a gay little gesture she took the step—one could truthfully call it the plunge.

Startled by the splash—for it was a very large splash indeed—Donald instinctively rushed forward to assist the stricken woman; but before he had reached the bank of the creek he stopped, all power of motion being completely arrested by what he saw.

Down the stream was rapidly disappearing the large pink hat which Mrs. Giggs had been wearing. Attached to the hat, and therefore completely detached from the person of its owner, was an elaborately marcelled coiffure of golden hair. The thought occurred to Donald, who had never before seen a transformation, that the widow had been scalped in her fall.

The bedraggled Mrs. Giggs, however, emerging from the water, gave visible evidence that no serious harm had befallen her person. Only her appearance was changed; but that change took on the quality of a metamorphosis. Donald stared incredulously at the extraordinary spectacle before him.

Replacing the widow's former crowning glory were a few wisps of grayish yellow hair, caught into a flat little knot on top, not unlike some of the more comic conceptions of newly arrived immigrants. Her non-waterproof rouge had mixed unevenly with a thick coating of powder, giving the general effect of strawberry and vanilla ice cream stirred together. The simile could be carried on to that of an undetectable sundae by imagining the two streams of black that ran down from each eyebrow to be chocolate sauce. Her tightly clinging dress gave the worst possible emphasis to a very lumpy figure.

It was in the mirror of Donald's astonished eyes that the adventurous lady realized the terrific disaster that had befallen her. Immediately she thought of her well-fitted compact, but it had gone to a watery grave.

There was a single hope. Mrs. Craigie might have the necessary materials with which to repair her damaged complexion. Certainly she *did* have the most important thing of all—a hat.

Mrs. Giggs gave her orders briskly, explicitly, concisely.

"Donald," she said, "get Mrs. Craigie quick! Be sure that she brings her pocket-book and her hat. Tell Mr. Wilkie *not* to come just yet under any circumstances."

There was an imperious tone in the speaker's voice, but it bred no action in the recipient of the command. He stood there looking at her with an expression which she began to interpret as delight at her misfortune. A hideous thought clutched at her heart—a premonition that was almost immediately fulfilled by Donald's crafty question:

"So ye don't want the meenister to see you the noo, eh?"

She collapsed.

"No, Donald! No! No! Please, Donald!" she begged a little hysterically.

With a vindictive leer, her heartless enemy turned on his heel and disappeared among the trees. She knew that he was not going for Mrs. Craigie.



"Donald!" she called piteously. "Oh, Donald!"

She might as well have tried to arrest, with words, the fall of a headman's ax. Nor did fate help her, geographically speaking, in the placing of Mr. Wilkie. After a short search, Donald found him a few hundred feet upstream, standing beside a large rock. Mrs. Craigie was some distance away, gathering wild flowers. With unholy joy the avenger realized that it would be possible to talk to the minister without being overheard. Engrossed in his malicious thoughts, Donald went up to where the reverend gentleman was standing.

"Wull ye come to Mistress Giggs at once, sair?" said the deceitful messenger in a tone of voice low enough not to reach Mrs. Craigie. "I'm feart she's hurted."

At this news, Mr. Wilkie took a convulsive step forward, stumbled, and almost fell. His words sounded the doom of Donald's nefarious scheme of vengeance.

"You'll have to lead me, Donald," he said. "I have just broken my glasses to bits on this rock, and I am absolutely blind without them."

### III

WITH the providential closing of Mr. Wilkie's eyes, those of the Widow Giggs were opened to the full malevolence of Donald's intentions toward her matrimonial hopes. In the days that followed the picnic she planned, with no small resource of cunning, to overcome the enemy.

Sensing the holy righteousness that motivated her opponent, she felt that the addition of attempted bribery to whatever other crimes she might have committed in his eyes would not help her cause. At the same time, she had a not unreasonable feeling that money will do almost anything. In this case, it was largely a question of delicacy in the handling—which explains a certain event that happened about a week later.

Donald was cutting the miniature grass plot in front of Mrs. Craigie's when he saw the Widow Giggs appear on the porch attired for town, her new transformation gleaming in the morning sunlight. She stood there for a minute or two, watching him, while he suspected—nor was he mistaken in suspecting—that she liked to see others work. The sight of the human body at labor was always a pleasant reminder

to her that the earthly frame which she occupied was seldom forced to any exertion whatever.

However, it was not for the purpose of gloating that she had appeared this morning, as Donald was soon to learn.

"Donald!" she called sweetly. The honeyed tone in which his name was spoken caused the lone workman to stop the lawn mower and look about in wonderment. "Donald, could I see you for a moment, please?"

It was certainly Mrs. Giggs speaking, incredible as it seemed to the perspiring grass cutter. Seldom did she preface a request with "could" or end it with "please." He advanced as one approaches a usually vicious dog who happens, at the moment, to be wagging its tail. Mrs. Giggs assumed the plaintive smile usually reserved exclusively for the Rev. Mr. Wilkie.

"Donald," she said in her most engaging manner, "I wonder if you would be so kind as to fix the window in my room to-day. I think the cord must be broken, for it's dreadfully hard to raise. I shall be out all day, and you can do it at your leisure."

"Aye, I wull," gasped the astonished Scot.

"Thank you so much!" purred Mrs. Giggs. "And because I know that it will probably be a very tiresome job, here's a little something for your trouble."

She handed him a folded greenback, and, with a final devastating smile, crossed the tiny lawn and proceeded up Walnut Street. Donald stood watching her in dumb amazement until she turned the corner. Then he looked at the bill she had given him.

Ten dollars!

He turned it over cautiously; it was unquestionably genuine. The fleeting thought came to him that she had gone insane—a supposition that would have become a certainty could he have seen the widow deliberately cutting the sash cord on her window before she came downstairs.

But an unexpected ten-dollar bill, honestly received, is not a matter for a Scotsman to worry over for any length of time. In Donald's mind it was an event to be celebrated rather than fretted about.

What Mrs. Giggs had surmised about the replacing of a sash cord was true—it was a long and tiresome job. To a man of his unsocial nature, however, there was

one consolation. The work would be done in the undisturbed privacy of Mrs. Giggs's room on the second floor back. The coincidence of a long and tiresome job in such a setting led naturally to an alluring plan which Donald proceeded to put into effect.

First he finished the lawn. Then, having ascertained that Mrs. Craigie was in the rear of the house, he strolled up the pleasant tree-lined thoroughfare which fronted her establishment and over to Market Street—an artery of elevated tracks and small stores. Entering an emporium apparently dedicated to the sale of magazines and soft drinks, he ignored the clerk who lounged negligently on the counter, and passed through a red curtain in the rear of the store—a curtain which usually, in such places, conceals the living quarters of the proprietor.

When he emerged, there was a suspicious bulge in the neighborhood of his inside coat pocket.

Donald's thoughts, as he strolled toward home, were monuments to the guile of Mrs. Giggs.

That worldly lady had reasoned correctly in not attempting the direct purchase of Donald's support in the conquest of Mr. Wilkie. It is doubtful if all the money that the late Stopworth had bequeathed her would have been sufficient to sway that Scottish mind by frontal attack; but the provision of legitimate toil, for which her contribution was honest payment, changed the situation entirely.

Of course the payment was outrageously high, but Donald laid that to her hitherto unsuspected and very worthy generosity. In fact, he began to see that a wealthy and undeniably open-handed wife would be no detriment to a young and struggling preacher. His opposition to the possibility of Giggs-Wilkie nuptials disappeared as completely as a large portion of the widow's tainted gift had faded in the back room of that soft drink establishment.

By the time he reached home, the pendulum had swung, as it usually does, from the deepest sin to the most abject repentance. Not only would he withdraw all objection to this eminently suitable match; he would further it in every possible way. Nothing would be too much for him to do in the matter of assistance.

Mounting to the abode of the recalcitrant sash cord, Donald removed his coat

and hung it over the knob of the door, thus effectually eliminating any possible keyhole observation. He had, on other occasions, seen the African contingent stoop to such methods. From the inside pocket of the coat he then removed a pint flask, embellished with a label which proclaimed the contents to be of the same nationality as himself. A few minutes later he had completely achieved that rare combination—business and pleasure.

Time passed quickly and delightfully. The window was finished, and the contents of the flask had dwindled by about half, when the unwelcome sound of approaching footsteps drifted in from the other side of the door. As the short hallway outside led only to this room, Donald hastily attempted to hide his burden. He put it in his hip pocket, only to realize that without a coat this would never do, particularly as the intruder would doubtless be Mrs. Craigie, checking the progress of the work.

A trifle confused at having to meet such a crisis with a slightly mellowed brain, he started across the room toward his coat, only to bring up inexplicably against the head of the bed. With an effort, he pulled himself together. The footsteps were coming closer. In a moment they had stopped outside the door, and an unseen hand grasped the outer knob. No time to reach the coat now!

As he heard the knob beginning to turn, Donald's frantic mind dictated a very impulsive act. With what was, under the circumstances, a remarkably deft motion, he slid the bottle down between the sheets of the bed, just as the door opened and the totally unexpected Mrs. Stopworth Giggs entered the room.

She smiled pleasantly. Donald grinned back, a little foolishly, but there was the light of forgiveness in his eyes. Probably it was the widow's joy at perceiving this that caused her to overlook his general condition.

"All finished, Donald?" was her cheery greeting.

"Aye—I mean no—but I will be if ye'll just gang awa fur twa or three meenutes."

Mrs. Giggs glanced at the window and started to remove her hat.

"That will do now, Donald," she said. "You can finish it to-morrow." Her voice became archly confidential. "Mr. Wilkie is coming for dinner to-night, and I want to get a little nap."

"But—" Donald started to say.

"Now, Donald," she interrupted, "run along like a good fellow. Every minute counts in a beauty sleep, you know."

He still hesitated, mindful of the unpleasant possibilities that might follow the leaving of that bottle in the widow's bed; but, try as he would, his fuddled brain failed to evolve any plausible method of recovering it.

There was nothing else to do but go—which he did, a little gropingly.

#### IV

Now it is necessary to explain a certain matter, even though such explanation may verge on the indelicate. Every garment worn by the generously proportioned Mrs. Giggs had a double duty to perform. The first, of course, was the obvious one of a covering. The other duty was that of compression. When Mrs. Giggs wanted to be comfortable, it was necessary for her to take off her clothes. Therefore, although this was but an afternoon nap, the widow embarked on it clad only in a very filmy nightgown.

That some people appear to sense the approach of a loved one is a well-known fact. Whether this is some form of magnetism, telepathy, or an undefined sixth sense, is not important. It is sufficient to state, without the necessity of calling it a coincidence, that Mrs. Giggs awoke from her beauty sleep at the precise moment that the Rev. John Wilkie was being admitted to the drawing-room downstairs.

In that glorious drowsy moment that follows a natural awakening, Mrs. Giggs stretched herself luxuriously. As she did so, her body touched something cold, smooth, and reptilian. With a start, she sat up in bed, drawing her bare flesh once more against that creepy thing, which she now realized was actually between the sheets.

Releasing an agonized scream, she leaped from the bed, the covers flying, while a pint flask and the remainder of its contents crashed unheeded to the floor. There it lay, a pathetic little pile of shattered glass in a spreading pool of brownish liquid.

"Help!" screamed Mrs. Giggs. "Oh, help!"

Mrs. Craigie, having started at the first piercing wail, was the premier arrival on the scene.

"What's the matter?" she asked, staring at the white-clad, wild-eyed Mrs. Giggs, whose knees were trembling so much that she stood up with obvious difficulty.

"Snakes!" sobbed Mrs. Giggs hoarsely.

Mrs. Craigie sniffed the now pungent air of the room.

"Snakes, eh?" she said dryly. "Pull yourself together, woman! The kind you're seeing won't hurt you!"

Every one else within sound of the screaming widow's voice had arrived outside the door by this time, including Mr. Wilkie, who had heard the commotion from the drawing-room downstairs.

"What is it?" he gasped to Mrs. Craigie, who had blocked the half open door with her body.

"Nothing, Mr. Wilkie," she lied with the kindest intent. "Nothing at all. Please go downstairs."

"Help!" came from within the room. "Snakes!"

"If she is threatened with danger, my place is beside her," said the gallant Mr. Wilkie.

Feeling certain, from the heart-rending quality of her screams, that she was threatened with something terrible, he pushed his way past the protesting Mrs. Craigie and entered the room.

Before him was a disheveled, white-faced woman, swaying unsteadily from side to side, and clawing wisps of grayish yellow hair out of her eyes with shaking fingers. Startled at the sight of the minister, she took a backward step, trod on the hem of her nightgown, and fell heavily to the floor.

Mr. Wilkie stepped forward, as if to help her. Then he stopped and sniffed the air. Over his face came a look of horrified understanding, which in turn melted into one of righteous indignation. Without another look at the moaning, recumbent figure on the floor, he turned on his heel, passed through the group of curious boarders outside the door, and marched down the stairs and out of the house.

Owing to a type of building construction that is all too uncommon these days, no sound of the debacle had penetrated below stairs. In the kitchen, Donald was finishing a somewhat confused explanation to Cremona of his changed attitude toward the Giggs-Wilkie alliance.

"Startin' the noo," Donald was saying, "I'm tae be yin o' they laddies wi' the wee bow and arrow—aye, that's it—Cupud!"

# The Law of the Jungle

THE STORY OF A MAN-EATER, AND OF THE STRANGE AND TERRIBLE RETRIBUTION THAT AVENGED HIS CRIMES

By Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon Casserly

THE tiger drew back silently into the thick undergrowth from which he had thrust out his head and shoulders, as the moonlit whiteness of the road that it bordered was obscured, at the bend a few hundred yards away, by what seemed to be huge shadows moving toward the spot where he crouched concealed. They came nearer, and as they passed he saw them to be the great bulks of wild elephants.

It was a herd on the march. First, with nodding heads and swinging trunks, the cows trudged by, the calves shambling along beside their mothers or treading close on their heels. Then the bulls, giants nine feet and more at the shoulder, their white tusks gleaming in the moonlight. The immature males and those long past their prime, and through age or infirmity deposed from the lordship of the various family groups composing the herd, followed humbly at the tail of the procession, careful to keep a respectful distance from the jealous and powerful tuskers in front of them.

In single file, as is the habit of their kind, the great beasts passed on noiselessly, their feet falling without sound on the dusty road piercing the vast Indian forest, the Terai Jungle, which stretches along the foot of the Himalayas for hundreds of miles through Assam, the two Bengals, and up into Nepal, the high-perched land from which the sturdy little Gurkhas come. This thoroughfare, which thus laid bare the secrets of the vast woodland, had been made to connect tea gardens planted in its very heart.

The lurking tiger watched the mammoths turn off into the jungle farther on and disappear; and the noise of trailing creepers dragged down, branches broken

off, and grass swept up in swathes by curving trunks, told of their passage through the trees on their before-dawn march. He had no quarrel with them, for there is no enmity between his race and theirs, except when a hungry tiger prowls around a herd in the hope of pulling down some foolish young calf elephant incautious enough to stray away from its kindred.

All the same, he saw them go with relief. If they had entered the jungle nearer him, and had spread about to graze as they marched onward, he would have had to move away from the small heap of bones by which he crouched and nosed from time to time in the hope of finding still clinging to them a scrap of flesh hitherto overlooked.

He placed his paw on the well gnawed skull, the round skull that slipped from under the curved claws. No animal in the forest about him owned such a skull. It was too big to be a monkey's. It hardly needed the torn strips of clothing scattered about, or caught on the thorns of the undergrowth, to proclaim that only a day before it had been a living human being's head; for the tiger was that dreaded pest of India, a man-eater.

Small wonder, then, that when at this hour of night all the jungle stirred, when the harmless animals were aquiver at every rustle that might speak of a prowling beast of prey, this striped brute lay lazily licking with roughened tongue the skull between his paws; for not until daylight would *his* game be afoot. Soon over the grim evidences of his crime he nodded and dozed.

A sudden crashing in the dense undergrowth a few yards away startled him, as a great sambar stag, with branching horns laid well back on its shoulders, dashed



wildly through the jungle; and another tiger in hot pursuit nearly blundered upon the sleeper. The man-eater sprang up with bristling hair and teeth bared in a savage snarl. The other started back in surprise; and then for a moment the two great cats faced each other with fierce growls and lashing tails.

But suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, the newcomer glimpsed the white bones among the green leaves of the earth plants. They told him that the stranger was no rival in the chase, that they hunted different game; and, haughtily disdainful, he drew away in disgust. For even among his own race the man-eater is accursed and an outlaw. The others of his breed know him as a danger to them, an outlaw and murderer whose crimes, bringing just retribution sooner or later, will cause the jungle to be invaded by armed hunters who will not discriminate between the criminal and the innocent game killers who must suffer for his sins.

And so, with a parting snarl of angry hate, the honest tiger passed on. Small wonder that he was annoyed, for the unexpected meeting had lost him all hope of overtaking the fleeing stag; and he must begin all over again the weary prow and the silent, stealthy stalk. Suddenly he checked with lifted paw and listened, then crept noiselessly to the edge of the road.

Along it came a little mob of bison—wild cattle six feet high at the shoulder, the bulls, distinguishable by their long horns, keeping a wary watch on the dark menace of the jungle on either hand. The cloven-footed herd passed on; and the hungry tiger, watching from the shadows, looked longingly but hopelessly at the fat calves in it. He had no wish to face the deadly charge of the huge bulls protecting them; and so he went on to look for easier prey.

The road again lay still and silent. Then from on high a swift shadow was flung on its whiteness, and the hush of the jungle was broken by a long, eerie wailing as a giant owl wheeled in circles above the trees. As the unearthly cry rang out like the lament of a lost soul, sleeping birds woke up in affright and crouched lower on their perches; while the monkeys on the topmost branches, huddling together for warmth in the night chill, stirred uneasily and clutched in their slumber at the hairy bodies of their neighbors.

Out on the road, under the brilliant tropic moon, blundered a clumsy, misshapen body; and clear and distinct in the vivid light stood the black bulk of a rhinoceros. It looked up and down the man-made trail, sniffed the air for a moment, then wheeled and plunged heavily into the jungle again, heedless of the noise it made; for it feared nothing that walked in the forest.

Once more silence. Then a drove of wild pigs pattered with quick steps down the road, the little eyes of the fierce boars glancing restlessly from side to side for peril to their females and young—peril to be warded off by their sharp tusks and dauntless hearts.

So the night passed. The man-eater slept over the bones of his victim; but all other living things on the ground were astir, either in fear or in murderous hunger.

## II

THE moon and the stars faded at the coming of the dawn. A pale light crept over the sea of tree tops, and gradually revealed against the brightening sky the dark mass of the mountain barrier of the Himalayas, which rose up, first in rounded, jungle-clad foothills, then in gaunt and dizzy heights, frowning cliffs and jagged peaks towering to the clouds, through which the white summits of the eternal snows thrust up, flushing with pink as they caught the first rays of the sun.

In the trees the birds stirred, twittered, fluffed their feathers, preened their wings, and greeted the morning with song. The clarion call of the forest, the jungle cocks' loud crowing, aroused the monkeys, who scratched themselves sleepily, yawned, and quarreled fretfully with their neighbors until they were fully awake. Then away they sprang through the tree tops, flinging themselves across wide gaps with seeming recklessness, but their ready paws never failed to grip the branch at which they aimed.

Still the man-eater dozed in the undergrowth by the roadside, where it was densest, for there the sun could reach and quicken it. It thinned farther in, where the life-giving light could only filter to it through the thick canopy of foliage overhead.

Suddenly the tiger lifted his head, with his nose in air and his ears pricked, as the

sound of human voices broke the silence. A number of barelegged coolies, their heads muffled in blankets against the chill of the early morning air, shuffled down the road, their naked feet raising a choking cloud of dust. The tapping of their wire-bound cudgels on the ground, the raucous coughs and harsh clearing of their throats, their babble and noisy chatter, daunted the tiger, cowardly yet greatly daring, as all man-eaters are. He crept nearer to the road, and through the screening leaves watched the coolies until they passed out of sight.

But a clatter and rattle, the jangling of bells, the groaning of straining wood, and the shrieking of ungreased axles, made him draw back again as a file of bullock carts, loaded with tea in lead-lined chests on the first stage of its journey to English breakfast tables, came around the bend. The drivers were whacking the bony backs of their patient cattle with sticks, and twisting their tails, while they yelled scandalous abuse of the toiling bullocks' female ancestors for specified generations back.

"*Ai! Teri ma!*" "*Ai, thy mother,*" they began, and said libelous things about her and her sister and her aunt and her mother's mother, as is the way of bullock drivers all over the Indian Empire.

The creaking carts passed on in white clouds of dust.

The sun had risen now, and soon came the swift heat of Bengal. Again silence fell on the forest. As the day grew, the beasts of prey slunk back to their lairs, the harmless deer lay down to rest and snatch the sleep that they dared not take in the perilous night. All things in the jungle, except the monkeys and the birds, ceased to move.

The road lay whiter than ever in the glare of the noonday sun. A gay chatter of young voices, a high-pitched laugh, and around the bend came a file of Hindu girls in bright-hued *saris*, the glass bangles on their rounded arms tinkling as hands were raised to steady the bundles carried on their heads. In their sleek, oiled black hair flowers were thrust with artistic touch. Their slender bodies and upright carriage, the curves of their bosoms and hips, would have delighted a sculptor; while a painter might have despaired of catching the sheen of their bronze skin and the gay colors of the garments wound tight about their graceful forms.

Laughing gayly, and chattering like a flock of parrots, they shuffled along on bare feet, above which gleamed silver anklets. Unconscious of the striped death lurking beside the way, they went on, picturesque and graceful; and a fiercer fire burned in the yellow eyes watching them, while the muscles rippled under the gaudily colored skin as the tiger's powerful limbs were drawn up ready for the fatal spring.

One girl, walking alone a few paces ahead of the rest, turned her head to address a remark to them; but the words were never spoken. There was a rustle in the undergrowth by the roadside, there was an agonized shriek as a huge body leaped out of hiding. With a lightning rush the murderous beast sprang at the unhappy woman. For an instant it rose on its hind legs, and then, its sharp claws protruding from its great paws, it half beat, half dragged her to the ground.

The other girls screamed and fled. The tiger, with uplifted head, the white fangs showing in the red mouth, stood glaring irresolutely after them; while under him lay the crumpled form of his victim, a dreadful dark stain slowly spreading in the white dust.

The brute hesitated, half inclined to follow the others. Then, with a growl, he seized his still breathing prey in his powerful jaws, lifted the slight body without an effort, and sprang back into the jungle with it. The girl's relaxed limbs trailed on the ground and struck against the spreading stems of the trees, while the thorny bushes caught and tore her thin garments to shreds; and the undergrowth closed behind slayer and slain.

### III

THERE is no peace for the wicked, says the old adage. Scarcely had day dawned once more over the forest when again the drowsy murderer was aroused by the coming of elephants; but this time they did not pass by along the road. Instead, to right, to left, behind him, he heard the fallen dry leaves crackle, the twigs snap, under the ponderous feet of the mammoths; and his quick ears told him that there was something strange and menacing in the manner of their approach.

These could be no group of the jungle giants harmlessly straying to feed; for there was no sound of creeper torn down or leafy branch broken off. Nor were they

on the march, since they were not coming in single file, as is their habit when they move on without loitering toward a new grazing ground.

The sounds were all around him now; so he rose quietly, prepared for any emergency. Through the thick canopy of leaves on the tree tops the wind could not penetrate; but a faint breeze stole at times among the boles. The tiger crept noiselessly from the densest undergrowth to a spot comparatively open, and there, lifting his great muzzle, sniffed. Instantly he stiffened, for a sluggish current of heated air bore to his sensitive nostrils a scent which to him was unmistakable—the scent of man!

At once he proposed to flee. Yet how could men be with elephants? The tiger paused with lifted foot, irresolute, puzzled. He could not understand it; for he did not know that there were elephants sunk so low as to be slaves to human beings. How could he guess that at the tea garden where was the village to which the dead girl belonged, and to which her companions had fled back, there chanced to be gathered together four Englishmen. The forest officer, the settlement officer, and the major commanding the nearest military post were visiting the manager of the tea estate, and each had with him one or two tame elephants.

The news of the killing reached them too late on the day it happened; but before dawn on the morrow they started out to "drive" the forest around the spot where the unhappy Hindu girl perished. The jungle was too thick to attempt to beat it in the usual way, with an extended line of elephants ridden by their *mahouts* hustling the tiger toward others on which the shooters would await his coming. The only course possible was to drive—that is, to spread out in a widely spaced single rank, with the animals bearing the riflemen dotted between the others, and to advance through the undergrowth near the scene of the tragedy, in the hope of stumbling on the slayer sleeping close to the remains of his victim.

They nearly had him, too. Puzzled by the unusual movements of the elephants and the strange combination of their scent with that of men, undecided in which direction to slink off, since the menacing sounds echoed all round him, the tiger lingered almost too long. He caught sight

of a tall tusker, and stared in amazement at its strange appearance, until it dawned on him that this was due to the fact that two men were seated on it. Amazed, but grasping the significance of this, he sprang like a flash toward a patch of thick cover—and, as he plunged into it, felt a searing pain along his side, while a sound like a clap of thunder filled the forest. A bullet had struck him, inflicting a painful flesh wound.

The tangled undergrowth gave way at the impact of the heavy body. Saplings bent, and the intricate network of interwoven branches was burst asunder, as the tiger hurled his weight at it. More than once, as he fled in wild panic, he almost brained himself against the thick boles of big trees; but each time he just saved himself by an instinctive swerve.

For miles he rushed on blindly, spurred by terror and the ache of his wound, which, although not dangerous, was very painful. Blundering through the tangled undergrowth, bounding across the bracken-clad open glades, jumping the fissured courses of dry rivulet beds, leaping down into the deeper ravines and clambering up their precipitous banks, he fled from the fear that gripped him—the fear of death with which he had inspired men and beasts, but which he had never felt before.

At last exhaustion overcame even his powerful frame and slackened his speed; but he still forced his way through the impeding vegetation, although more slowly now, and kept on with heaving flanks and dripping tongue.

A raging thirst tormented him. When at last the welcome scent of water reached his nostrils, and he sprang down into the bed of a running stream, he plunged in belly deep and lapped feverishly, often pausing and lifting his head to listen and look about him in fear. Wading across, he climbed to the opposite bank, and, heavy with his drink, went on, but slower, now, and stumbling with fatigue; until at length he could go no farther, and dropped, utterly exhausted, in thick cover.

There he lay, panting, licking his wound and quivering with terror that made him prick up his ears at every fancied sound. He had far outdistanced pursuit; and at last his tired head dropped on his paws, and, his heart thumping against his ribs, he rested and tried to puzzle out what had happened.

He could not understand the reason of this unprovoked attack. He had no quarrel with the elephants; and how could he comprehend that, because he had slain some human beings, others should seek him out and attack him?

He was conscious of no crime. He had only obeyed the law of the jungle—kill or be killed, to the stronger the victory. All creatures in the forest preyed on one another; why should he not devour these weaker two-legged things? The riddle was too hard for him. His eyes flickered, closed, opened, then shut again; and he slept the sleep of the weary in the deep silence of the jungle.

#### IV

A MAN-EATER is made, not born. Tigers have the same dread of human beings as other creatures of the wild, and will turn aside from them. Sometimes they withdraw growlingly from a kill if intruded on by men. It needs an accidental happening or some very strong impulse to overcome this fear.

The woodland murderer of women who now lay sleeping in sheer exhaustion had begun his career, like the other jungle dwellers of his race, by hunting the deer and wild pig that roamed the forest. Once, when he was chasing a sambar hind, a sharp splinter of a broken bamboo stem had run deep into his paw; and the wound, festering, lamed him for weeks.

Unable to run down his usual quarry, he was limping hungrily, one day, through a part of the jungle strange to him, when he found himself close to a village. The habitations of men were rare in the forest, and he had hitherto kept clear of them; but starvation makes desperate; and in the scrub near the huts a few lean cows were grazing. Belly to earth, he crawled stealthily up the wind to them and sprang on a young heifer, which, when it caught sight of him, only stared stupidly at him, instead of bolting at once, as the more wary deer would have done.

The other cows, before scampering off with uplifted tails, stood gazing just as foolishly at the strange apparition long enough to enable him to attack them had he wished; but he contented himself with the one victim, which he lifted and bore away into the jungle with surprising strength.

The ease with which he had made his

catch turned him from game killer to cattle thief; for he found beef easier to come at than venison, and quite as palatable. So he haunted this forest hamlet and others in turn, lying in wait for the cows, which were taken out by children to graze every morning and driven back at night to be shut up in the byres.

He grew used to seeing, from his hiding place, human beings passing and repassing, and so lost his fear of them. On one occasion he burst out of the undergrowth on a small herd of cattle, trusting that his sudden appearance would have its usual effect of paralyzing the terrified animals and holding them until he could select one of them and pull it down; but this time the youth in charge was between him and the cows. Like most natives, the young herdsman had little fear of tigers, because ordinarily they are harmless to men; and so he ran with uplifted cudgel at the cattle thief, shouting loudly in the hope of frightening him away.

But the striped brute was starving. Luck had been against him, and he had gone hungry for three days; so, furious at the interference with his meal, he turned on the rash boy and struck him lifeless to the ground.

The lad's self-sacrifice was not unavailing, for the cattle were alarmed, and bolted; and the disappointed beast, standing over the motionless form, glared in angry despair after them. Then the smell of the blood of his human victim reached his nostrils, and suggested that possibly this new prey might satisfy his hunger; so he gripped the body in his jaws and limped off with it into the jungle. And thus was a man-eater made.

This accidental killing taught him that of all animals human beings were the easiest to slay. The wild pigs and the deer needed careful stalking. A stout old boar with razor-edged tusks, and a sambar stag, the thrust of whose sharp antlers was backed by the weight of an animal fourteen hands high, were formidable foes. The young of bison, buffalo, and elephant were tasty morsels, and easily overcome, if only they could be caught at a safe distance from the adults of the herd; but that rarely happened, unfortunately. Monkeys, too, were toothsome mouthfuls, if one could catch them on the ground—which again was seldom.

Human beings, however—the men, wom-



en, and children who walked unarmed through the jungle or loitered around the forest villages—were defenseless and slow of foot, and could neither run away nor climb trees quickly enough to escape even a lame tiger.

So this one set himself to prowling around the hamlets at dusk and haunting the paths through the trees by day, and took toll of the forest dwellers. The number of his victims rose slowly—much too slowly for him; for, after the first few deaths, the panic-stricken villagers grew careful and avoided going out except in parties. With all their precautions the tiger still found victims, but not enough to satisfy him; so he had to eke out his supply with deer and pigs.

Changing his hunting ground, he had come to the made road, where fortune at first seemed to favor him, since he made a couple of kills in the first two days. Hitherto his slaying had been done far from the haunts of white men, who had both power and inclination to punish him for what they held to be crime, although he was merely obeying the first law of nature in finding food where he could; but the death of the girl brought the intervention of the avengers from whom he had so narrowly escaped.

At the first sounds of the dawning day he awoke, with a start, to the renewed realization of fear; and it sent him fleeing, with the wild thought of putting as many leagues of jungle between himself and his mysterious assailants as he could. His wound pained him, his limbs were stiff; but the impulse of terror drove him steadily on, and he loped swiftly away from the mountains.

## V

BEFORE NOON he saw daylight between the trunks of the trees, and slackened his pace cautiously. The undergrowth grew thicker; so, slowing down to a cautious walk, he stole forward through the bushes and suddenly found himself looking out on a road again. He drew back at the sight of it, for it seemed as if he had returned to the scene of his disaster; and he listened instinctively for the sound of the approaching elephants.

All was still, however, and presently he ventured to peer out. The road lay white and empty in the strong sunlight, and beyond it rose the dark wall of the trees

again; but between the two, and parallel to them, ran two shining ribbons glistening in the sunshine. The glitter of them caught the tiger's eyes and puzzled him, for he had never seen a railway before. He was looking at the line which, coming from the open plains of Eastern Bengal, pierces the forest to end at Jainti, at the foot of the mountains, where it would meet the bullock carts on the Hathipota road from the tea gardens, to carry the lead-lined wooden cases another stage of their long journey.

As the lurking beast blinked through the screening foliage at the gleaming steel rails, a sudden sound struck his ears. Quivering with excitement, he turned his great head to look up the road.

Along the dusty thoroughfare came two figures, a man and a woman, the latter balancing a heavy bundle on her head and shuffling along on bare feet behind her unburdened husband. At sight of them the tiger was instantly assailed by a griping hunger. With twitching nostrils he drew himself noiselessly, inch by inch, closer to the thin screen of leaves that hid him from the road. His prey was delivered into his claws!

Unconscious of the lurking doom, the two Indians trudged on in the dust toward his hiding place. The muscles in the great limbs gathered under the yellow and black body grew tense as once more the man-eater crouched for a fatal spring.

The couple came abreast of him, the husband flinging an occasional careless word over his shoulder to the heavy-laden woman behind. Then, with a sudden rustle, the green curtains of the screening bushes parted, and out on the unhappy wife leaped the yellow brute. One blow of the great paw drove her lifeless to the earth.

The man ran, screaming in terror; but, as he reached the railway track, the tiger was upon him. Rising on its hind legs, the beast struck him down.

Then the slayer stood over his victim, his sharp claws piercing the brown skin, and looked around with a fierce snarl, as if defying the world to take his prey from him.

His challenge was instantly answered. There was a dull rumble, ever growing louder. The ground under him shook; and, as the astonished tiger turned his head, around a curve of the shining rails, between

the walls of trees, a huge monster rushed at him with a deafening roar.

The dismayed man-eater drew back snarlingly, his ears flattened, his white teeth showing in the threatening scowl that he used to daunt his foes. With a courage born of hunger, he refused to abandon his prey, and turned to face the onrush of this amazing enemy, which with shining eyes bore straight down on him, vomiting sparks and smoke, the earth trembling at its coming.

The driver of the daily passenger train of this unfrequented railway, looking out through the round glass windows of his cab, saw the tiger standing with bristling hair and bared fangs in the middle of the track, facing the locomotive with desperate valor. He did not see the huddled body of the man, which lay just behind the great beast.

He was used to seeing wild animals of the jungle on the line. Before now he had had to halt his train for hours, because a solitary bull elephant had chosen to take his midday siesta standing across the rails, and it would have been unwise to risk a collision with the great bulk of the pachyderm. One driver of a pilot engine had tried it to his cost. The engine was derailed, and he spent the next six weeks in hospital.

But this smaller beast was another mat-

ter; so, without checking speed, the driver gave a piercing blast of the steam whistle and held on, expecting to see the tiger leap aside and plunge into the forest. At that moment he caught sight of the prostrate woman in the road, and saw her husband's body lying on the track in front of him. The shocking sight filled him with anger. No longer content with scaring off the tiger, he increased his speed to the utmost, in the wild hope of running the murderer down, though he never really expected to do so.

The wild shriek of the whistle proved too much for the man-eater's nerves. Just as the engine was almost on him, he jumped round and bolted; but, instead of leaving the track, he raced straight on in front of the train. Naturally enough, he thought only of outdistancing the terrible pursuer, and believed that it could follow him in any direction.

Fast as he fled, it came faster; and finally, with the courage of despair, he stopped and turned savagely on the strange monster pursuing him.

Only the driver felt the shock as the engine caught the tiger up, shattered him, and hurled him aside, the life crushed out of his broken body. Man's handiwork had avenged man. Once more the law of the jungle had been obeyed—to the strongest the victory.

### THE RIVER'S MUSIC

RIVER, if any sweetness in my song,  
Not mine, but yours it is, so many a time  
I strove to catch the ripple of your tongue,  
The syllables of your mysterious rime—  
Dactyls and spondees in an even flow,  
With the cæsura of some pebbly bar;  
So pondered I old Vergil long ago,  
Latin still fresh and running as you are,  
With many a mirrored rush and swaying star.

But, as through the old verse a magic ran,  
Baffling the ear, too subtle to divine,  
A sorcery no prosodist might scan,  
So is it, river, with your magic line.  
So far the measure of your music goes,  
But something sings below it all the time—  
Something mysterious that flows and flows,  
And laughs at all the little laws of rime!

Richard Leigh

# The Killer's Mate

BEWARE OF THE LIONESS, AVOID THE COBRA'S WIFE, AND BE  
EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS IN THE PRESENCE OF  
THE PRIZE FIGHTER'S LADY LOVE

By Charles Francis Coe

IT is generally admitted that, on their holidays, mail men hold a parade. Deep sea divers, in their leisure hours, are addicted to surf bathing. Baseball players invariably attend a game in the other league when their own teams are not playing.

And if any argumentative soul should challenge the foregoing paragraph, let him observe the following sentence: Pugilists always are to be found in a fight crowd, and they are forever talking shop.

There is a certain antithirst emporium, approachable by fourteen brownstone steps and a grilled door, behind which presides one simply known as Harry, a past master in the art of recognition or evasion. In this sanctum Socker Dooley spent his spare time. He squandered it conversationally.

Socker was a fighter of the modern school, and that means a business boxer. He was publicly a justly famed champion, and from his battles he extracted large sums of money which he guarded with caution and multiplied by a strong acquisitive tendency. When not fighting, Dooley talked fight.

It naturally followed now that the name of Tiger Caputo should become repetitious in the mouths of fighters. One punch did it. The Italian-American had landed it flush on the jaw of Tommy Nolan, whereupon the latter ceased to be a factor in the game of fisticuffs.

"Tom passed out plenty," said Timothy Figley, who owned the sanctum, and whose tonsorial perfection and general knowledge of fights and fighters stamped him as a man apart. "The kid is through. This wop pasted him right into a new future outside the ring."

Socker, always acutely interested in the rise of a menace to his profitable kingship, shrugged a disdain he might not have felt. One battered eyebrow lifted slightly, and the world thereby understood, or was supposed to understand, that Dooley doted on competition, and feared nothing in human form.

"Mebbe you're right," Tim shrugged in answer to the gesture. His perfectly draped shoulders hunched, and he ran a hand over a pompadour that would have inspired art advertisers. Not a hair became disarranged.

His hands, like those of Socker, were square. The fingers were blunt, and appeared to spring haphazard from a bunched disarray of knuckles.

When youth had fired his blood, Figley had seen no little of pugilistic conflict from inside the ring. His deep brown eyes still sparkled with vigor, his tanned and unwrinkled face was aglow with enthusiasm.

Tim was very smart in the ways of fighting men.

"Yes," he continued, further answering Socker's disdainful gesture, "you may be right. Mebbe this Angelo Caputo is a large bust, just like most of them. But I get the story straight—the Tiger punches like a hurricane. It took two surgeons twenty minutes to locate Tommy Nolan's whiskers after that smack connected."

"Ever since I been champ," Socker Dooley retorted, "there has been guys springing up that was all set to ruin my health in one evening. I'm still healthy."

"There's always the exception, Socker," Tim countered earnestly. "A champ without confidence is like a wild duck without wings. But, on the other hand, what good are wild wings without a duck? Be confi-

dent all the time, I say, but be sure your wings are set to fly, too."

"Angelo, eh?" Dooley scoffed. "With a name like that, only a boxing commission could make a guy a fighter!"

"He socked Tommy Nolan plenty," Figley reminded him, his eyes gleaming earnestly. "You can't get past that—and Tommy has been around long enough to keep his whiskers inside his mitts."

"I didn't see the fight," Socker said, indifferently, "so I can't say. But I been on barnstorming trips myself, and us Eastern guys ain't always in the best shape when we stack up against these local champs. Tommy mebbe guessed wrong, that's all."

## II

ONCE again Tim Figley shrugged. He was on the point of elaborating his philosophy when the conclave was interrupted by the appearance of Dinny Barth, fistic promoter.

Dinny stepped to the counter of the sanctum and leaned against its rounded edge. The bar was long and narrow, and the edge bore many scratches from sleeve buttons and watch chains. He surveyed the gathering with interest, nodded at Jimmy and spoke to Socker.

"I see," he announced with the nonchalant air of a man who spreads first hand news as if it was old stuff to him, "that Tommy Nolan is dead!"

"Dead!" Figley cried. "Tommy Nolan! Dead!"

"Dead!" Dooley echoed.

"Uh, huh," Barth went on, waving a command to the bartender, and with another twist of the wrist including all present. "This guy Tiger Caputo pasted him to death. Tommy died four hours after the bout. Angelo broke his neck."

"He must of been doped!" Socker exploded. "Tommy needed something as strong as that to let a bimbo like Angelo knock him dead!"

"You never can tell," Figley insisted. He drew forth a cigarette case and extracted a smoke. His air was that of a thinker deep in thought.

Barth, emptying his glass at a gulp, turned to capitalize upon his position of herald.

"We wired out there," he explained, "when the word of the kayo comes in over the ticker. We're always looking for

talent, and any guy that socks Tommy Nolan horizontal in one paste is class."

"I been trying to tell Socker that!" Figley exclaimed.

Barth went on, first reaching into an inner pocket and withdrawing a telegram:

"The papers 'll carry the story, but here's the real low down: Tommy Nolan takes a smack on the button. They carry him out of the ring, with Angelo, the Tiger, going along crying like a baby. At the hospital they do all they can for Tommy, but he dies in four hours. Who are his relatives, says this telegram, and will I wire where to send his end of the purse?"

"Killed him with one smack!" Tim Figley murmured, awe in his usually blasé tones.

"He might of just caught him right," Socker mumbled. "Things like that can happen, you know."

"Sure!" Tim snapped. "And if he had missed him, mebbe Tommy Dolan would of died later from pneumonia! But he didn't miss—and Tommy wasn't a slouch, either. You can take it from me that this Angelo is no angel."

"I fought Tommy Nolan," Socker pointed out, "and knocked him for a goal."

"That's what's worrying me," Figley muttered. "You socked Tommy, and he lived to fight again. I'll put my dough on Tiger Caputo."

"Meaning he'll lick me?" Socker demanded incredulously, his heavy chin driving forward belligerently.

"He ain't even matched with you," Tim snapped. "You certainly are a touchy guy, Socker."

## III

DOOLEY really was angered. He shoved close to the counter, and his twisted fingers gripped the curved edge while he glared at the immaculate Timothy.

But Dinny Barth was not through with his bombshell dropping. From the same inner pocket he drew still another wire.

"Mebbe," he remarked slowly, "you birds would like to hear all the story."

The silence of deep interest rewarded the promoter.

"I wired back Tommy's address," he said, "and other information. Then I thought of my partners in the promotion of sporting events, and I suggested that Tiger Caputo could find work right here in New York."



Figley enthusiastically thumped the counter with his battered fist. Socker shrugged, but his gaze did not leave the face of Barth, who continued:

"We are going to have a look at the Tiger. He is being managed by none other than Sandy McBurr, the well-known Scotch spendthrift. Sandy is smart. I'm told he won a golf match once because the other guy had a sunstroke and Sandy made him count it! Sandy will build Caputo up. He will bring him East a big card after the killing of a tough boy like Tommy Nolan."

"I'm glad he's coming here," Timothy declared. "I'd like to see this wop boy fight!"

"He's coming East," Barth repeated calmly. "I wired we had a contract with Socker, the champ, and would see that the Tiger got a whack at the title!"

"I've got a contract with nobody!" Socker protested.

Barth raised a hand for silence, then waved magnanimously again to the attendant at the counter.

"You will have," he said confidently to Socker. "All I know about Angelo Caputo is that he is a killer. Sandy McBurr will do well with that fact. I offer you ten thousand to dust off the dial of this wop boy. Now we got a contract, ain't we?"

"Ten grand?" Socker asked.

When Barth nodded agreement, Dooley said: "Yeah, we got a contract, Dinny! But I'd like to get a line on this killing bimbo first."

"No exact," Barth declared. "We'll do business. I know you, Socker; you'd fight Mussolini's entire army for ten grand. The match is on. Sandy says Angelo thinks he can whip the world. The kid is tough, all right. When he heard that Tommy Nolan was dead, he said: 'Aw, just another Irish-gone!'"

"He said what?" Socker Dooley demanded fiercely.

"'Just another Irish-gone!'" Barth repeated indignantly. "I'm a harp, too, Socker!"

The blunt fingers of Timothy Figley drummed a funeral march on the long counter. The Tiger's words sent a poisoned dart deep into his heart.

"I thought you said," he reminded Barth, "that this wop insect left the ring crying when they carried Tommy out."

"I said exactly that, and he did," Dinny

replied. "But haven't you ever seen a guy get tough after an accident?"

Tim had, and so had Socker. The latter straightened up as one whose mind has dictated action.

"Bring on this garlic eater!" he said, for the benefit of all. "For ten grand we have a contract, Dinny. What do you think now, smart guy?" he asked, turning abruptly upon Figley.

"I think," Tim answered, "that you will paste this killer plenty. There never yet was a wop that could beat a good mick."

#### IV

NEW YORK received Sandy McBurr and his charge with a blare of publicity. The cold-blooded phrase of Angelo Caputo, uttered on the occasion when he had learned of the death, at his own hands, of Tommy Nolan, was registered in the minds of the sporting fraternity. The papers carried Angelo's photograph, and some observers found in the Latin face a soulful expression that seemed to belie the bitter comment his thin lips had uttered:

"Just another Irish-gone!"

The words were repeated a thousand times, and aligned themselves perfectly into plans for the expected battle between Tiger Caputo and that master of timing and hitting, Socker Dooley. On every sporting lip there was talk of the impending battle.

But, although Angelo quickly became known as "the killer," some rumors showed him in the light of a gentle soul who fought because he could fight better than he could do most anything else, and wanted money with which to marry the girl of his dreams. It was definitely reported that the young woman had come East for the struggle that her lover was to make.

Socker was ominously silent about the impending fight. Angelo appeared wordless.

Even in his training the Tiger said nothing. The wise boys of the fraternity watched his work-outs with high interest. It was observed that he was holding back most of his tricks, but that occasionally he threw across just such a blow as killed the gallant Tommy Nolan—missing his sparring partner by a careful distance, of course.

"The punch is always the big bet in a ring," Tim Figley admitted grudgingly,

"but Socker has been known to twist a cream puff all out of shape himself. And the wallop has got to land, don't forget that! It ain't any good until it hits. In fifteen rounds, Socker is hard to beat."

Sandy McBurr did a heavy job of publicity. Angelo Caputo was reported to be a veritable demon, who went mad at the clang of a gong and recovered sanity only when an opponent's bleeding form lay inert at his feet.

"They better keep that guy away from the sound of fire alarms," Socker sneered upon reading these accounts, "or he'll be killing folks in the public streets!"

The Tiger's future happiness was stated to be the stake for which he would fight. Victory meant marriage.

His girl had come to see herself fought for, and the killer was keyed up, according to Sandy McBurr, to a pitch higher than in the hour of his memorable battle with the lamented Tommy Nolan.

New York, in box office parlance, "went for it." Dinny Barth announced a sell out before the day of the fight. Speculators offered tickets peculiarly obtained, and the gentle public, confident that no one would be killed in the ring, paid huge prices to be certain of a seat in case the unexpected happened.

"My Angelo will win!" declared Rosa Amato, the killer's sweetheart. "I will be at the ringside where he can see me, and that will make him fight harder. I know all about fighting; Angelo has taught me. I know the rules, and I will be watching to see that this champion obeys them."

In the sanctum, Socker Dooley received reports from his scouts who had been among the crowds watching Angelo train. Tim Figley was one.

"He can't fight, Socker!" he declared vehemently. "You can feed him a left hand till he thinks the people are throwing gloves at him like confetti. But he can sock! He hit one of his trainers so hard yesterday that a button fell off of my vest!"

"He ain't smart, is he?" Socker demanded, alluding to ring knowledge.

"He don't even suspect anything!" Tim replied scornfully. "That girl of his has more brains than Sandy and him combined. I have a hunch she's smart."

"I ain't fighting her," Socker pointed out scathingly. "I can beat any man in the world that's dumb, no matter what he weighs."

"Keep him away from you, Socker," Figley urged. "I'm going to bet a little sugar on you to cop easy, but watch out for that dynamite in his right hand!"

"Speaking of betting," Socker said softly, glancing about the room to be certain that no ear other than Timothy's might hear, "take my ten grand and lay it on me to win."

Figley pursed his lips, wrinkled his brow, and ran a hand over his rubberlike pompadour. It was clear that he was thinking.

"I ain't so sure about that," he confessed slowly.

"Why not?" Socker protested. "I'll lay this bimbo flat with a tough glance. You ain't getting cold feet, are you?"

"Ten grand! That's a lot of money at the odds you'll have to give."

"How's the betting right now?"

"Three to one on you," Timothy groaned the admission. A pained look filled his eyes. "One guy offered even money Angelo won't go ten rounds with you!"

"Yeah?" Socker looked like a man who had received no news, but was casting about for some. His battered brows lowered a little, and he leaned still closer. "That would be an easy bet to win, Tim!" he suggested gently.

"It sure would!" Figley agreed, and there was delight in his tone. "I was going to talk this over with you, but—"

"But what?"

"Well, that crack he made about another Irishman being gone. I thought you might get rough with him."

"Listen here," Socker challenged. "I ain't fighting for glory. It's money I'm after. Get my ten grand down that he goes the limit with me, savvy?"

Timothy's sleeve wrinkled, because his arm was about Socker's neck. His face became a mass of corrugations owing to the breadth of his smile. He patted Socker's shoulder, and something akin to a hug passed between them.

"Yours and mine, too, baby!" Figley promised. "Boy, what a cinch!"

"I'll carry him the whole fifteen rounds and paste him plenty for that crack about the Irish," Socker announced. "I had that in mind all the time. You get the dough down that way, Tim. Don't lay it yourself, because folks know we're pals."

"It's as good as down!" Timothy declared. "If I get even money on the bet

we'll have twenty thousand plasters of easy money, Socker!"

And so arrived the night of the fight between Tiger Caputo, the killer, and Socker Dooley, the champion. Each was to do battle for that which he desired most—money for the Socker, matrimony for the Tiger.

Timothy Figley's statement that Rosa Amato was smart appeared accurate when Dinny Barth admitted that she and Angelo had called upon him that afternoon and demanded their guarantee. He had paid it, he said, because the killer otherwise would never have entered the ring.

"That gal is poison!" the Scotchman said. "Talk about cold-blooded—that one! And Angelo takes his orders from her, you can bet on that."

"He turned his end over to her?" Socker asked.

"Every dime! She counted the dough three times before she let him sign for it."

"He can't be so tough," Socker remarked. "Not when he gives dough to a woman!"

"I don't know how he ever killed a guy," Barth admitted. "He moons out of them eyes like a schoolgirl. He never says nothing. I would pick him as a guy that would do well at chess. He is tender-hearted, if you ask me!"

"Just another Irishman gone!" Socker quoted. "Any tenderness that wop feels to-morrow won't be in the heart, Dinny!"

## V

ANGELO CAPUTO, commonly known as the Tiger, stood morosely in his corner. Behind him, at the floor level, was Rosa Amato, his sweetheart.

She was a vivid, pretty girl. Her jet black hair was bobbed. She had large dark eyes, olive skin, and regular features. Miss Amato was admired by all the near-by spectators, but Sandy McBurr scowled bleakly upon her now and then.

At the opposite edge of the ring was Timothy Figley. His usual perfection of garb was evident in a brown creation with broadened shoulders and tapering waist line.

In his buttonhole a single white flower added the touch of sentiment. He arose and added his acclaim as Socker Dooley appeared in the distance and headed for the ring.

When the gladiator who had scaled the

championship heights entered the arena, he glanced about and met Figley's gaze. One of Timothy's eyes closed in an amazing wink, and Socker knew that his ten thousand had been placed to advantage. All he needed to do now was to let the Tiger remain on his feet until the close of the fight.

Dooley crossed the ring and shook Caputo's hand.

"Stand by for a pasting, kid," the champion muttered. "The first time I hit you it'll be so hard two of your cousins will burst into flames!"

Angelo grunted and shrugged. Rosa's voice came up from the edge of the ring, encouraging her warrior.

Formalities were run off promptly. Champion and challenger posed for a picture, and Timothy Figley managed to insert another happy wink into the situation.

At the bell Socker came out cautiously. The Tiger slunk forth with murder in his eye and threw his famous right-hand wallop as an opening gun.

Dooley permitted the blow to slip over his shoulder and stepped in close. Both his hands pumped to Angelo's stomach and the festivities had begun.

The Tiger was not hurt. He endeavored to fight in and out of the clinch, but found his arms in a tangle. Suddenly Socker's shoulder heaved upward, and Angelo's right arm was twisted so that the ligaments of his shoulder stung.

When he stepped back, a bit mystified, Socker let go with a light left hook to the face. Angelo grinned.

"Come to it, wop!" Dooley said gently. "'Just another Irishman gone!'"

With the words he stepped in close, weaved so that the Tiger missed foolishly, then darted a stiff right to the left eyebrow. Angelo backed away, but not in time to avoid a left hook which creased his nose and drew red.

"Sure!" Socker taunted. "Think about Tommy Nolan a little!"

Caputo continued to back away, and Socker pressed him. Again the left landed, then the right and left again. Angelo, in desperation, shot his famous right, but Socker was back so far that the killer nearly threw himself off his feet.

Some one laughed, and Dooley recognized the voice of Figley. Timothy knew that Socker's blows were being pulled to a nicety. The champion needed only to snap

his punches in the true Dooley manner to win by a knock-out—but this bout was to go the limit.

Figley smiled. It was good to see this killer paying for his ugly remark about the Irish. It was even better to anticipate the collection of a considerable sum of money for the watcher.

Socker knew his job, and he did it beautifully. Just at the close of the round he stepped in and again hit Caputo on the nose. This time there was snap in the effort, and Angelo's head went back and he staggered away. The bell rang at just the right moment, and Dooley went smilingly to his corner.

Some gallery hound had sensed that the match was ill advised. He bayed at Angelo and mocked him with his titles of killer and tiger.

"The only thing that guy'll hit will be the floor!" he bellowed.

But in his corner Angelo appeared unconcerned. Sandy McBurr administered to the bleeding nose, and the incident seemed closed.

## VI

THE second round was a repetition of the first. It was all Socker's. A straight left, a right cross, a one-two punch—none failed of its mark.

Caputo's face became swollen a little, and his lips were bleeding. One eye had garnered what the ring folk call a mouse. The evening, for Angelo, threatened to be a highly painful one.

But the Tiger was strong and willing and courageous. At intervals he tried desperately with his wicked right. But it was a hopeless effort.

Socker was too smart, too cool, too experienced, for the challenger. He weaved about the ring, jockeyed Angelo into ridiculous positions and hit him at will.

A queer expression came into Sandy McBurr's face. He ceased to watch the fighters, and his eyes swept across the floor of the ring to Tim Figley. One of the latter's brown orbs winked, but this time it meant ridicule. Anger swelled in Sandy's breast.

A few seconds before the bell, Socker's right connected, and once more Caputo staggered back, his face stained red.

"Just another Irishman gone," Angelo! Dooley snarled as he closed in. The bell rang in good time for Angelo.

Socker was measuring the courage of his

opponent. He was determining how far he could go without going too far. Not daring to make Angelo crumple up, he also was afraid to attack less viciously than the occasion demanded. The eyes of five thousand Irish-Americans were watching Socker Dooley.

So the rounds passed, Caputo taking his medicine stoically. The affair was a romp for the champion.

In the clinches Dooley slipped the heel of his glove under Angelo's tortured nose, or rubbed his hair earnestly against the Tiger's ear or lips. When the killer came close in an effort to stem the tide of punishment, he found Socker's shoulder under his chin, and felt his head snapped back in an amazing fashion.

There was one thing which puzzled the Tiger and the crowd, too. How could a man remain a champion with as light a punch as Socker Dooley was showing? His blows ripped and cut and tore; they shaved and burned and bruised—but they did not stun.

At the close of each three minute round Socker landed sharply, and the minute intermissions found Sandy McBurr working hard over Angelo to overcome the effects of a real punch. Each time he succeeded, and Caputo's fighting heart carried him forth to absorb more punishment.

The twelfth round came with Angelo still strong, and trying desperately with his ponderous right. But he was a sadder and a wiser Tiger, and hardly a spectacle to arouse enthusiasm anywhere outside of a surgical clinic.

Socker was always the master at work in the ring. He taunted Angelo, and tricked him a hundred times. He lured him into a charge only to side-step and see Caputo hurtle into the ropes, a target for the gibes of the multitude.

Then he would help Angelo to his feet again while the crowd cheered his sportsmanlike attitude. They missed the fact that Socker's thumb had gouged into the killer's eye as he muttered: "Just another Irishman gone!"

In the thirteenth round Socker repeatedly missed his left jabs, and, for the first time, Caputo became hopeful. He watched the flying left that, until now, had found lodgment on his bruised nose and lips. It missed by a fraction of an inch, and he believed that Socker had lost his judgment of distance.



At last his plodding gameness was bearing fruit, Angelo thought. He timed the jabs, and perfected in his mind a right counter that would win in a punch.

Socker's glove darted forth and came to rest on the killer's left shoulder. Like a flash Angelo slid in close and started his right.

Then there came a blinding flare before his eyes, and his knees sagged under him, while a great hurt numbed his head. He dimly heard the yelling of the crowd, and felt Socker's arms about him in a clinch.

It was not until the fight was over that Caputo realized that all those missed jabs had been only another cruel plot. Socker had drawn him into that attempted counter, and Angelo's face brought up sharply against Socker's rigid elbow.

"'Just another Irisher gone,' Angelo!" Socker jeered in the clinch. When they separated, Caputo backed to the ropes, his eyes misty with the understanding of inevitable defeat. But he stood his ground, and the blows that Socker landed ceased, for a reason that the Tiger did not suspect, to hurt him.

In the rest period before the fourteenth round, Socker leaned forward, elbows on knees, and battered brows raised as he glanced about. He knew that he could not lose.

He had had his vengeance. Now he would dance six minutes more in the concluding rounds, collect his money, then hie himself to the sanctum and hero worship.

Figley was there at the edge of the ring, whispering to a sports reporter. By chance he raised his eyes and grinned broadly at the champion. His lips formed the words "even money," and Socker knew that this was a lovely evening.

## VII

THE bell rang and Dooley arose to romp through to victory. He would not, he decided, risk any more damaging blows to his antagonist, who did not look like the original Angelo at all. A sad transformation had stamped the Tiger's features as a fresh painted bench stamps the trousers of the incautious. His face was a crosshatch of woe.

They met in the center of the ring, and Socker grinned a false welcome.

"Come to it, wop!" he taunted. "Do your killer stuff!"

Caputo hurled his massive right in Sock-

er's general direction. From the corner of the killer, Sandy McBurr was shouting fevered orders.

"Throw your punches!" he shouted. "Don't stop for nothing, Angelo! One of 'em will land!"

Socker smiled and danced away. Angelo, a swirl of flying arms, chased him. The crowd was up and shouting encouragement in which there was ridicule as well.

"Give 'im a handful o' beans!" a gallery wag suggested. "Dat's de only way he can sock de Socker!"

As a matter of sheer defense, Dooley jabbed incessantly to Caputo's nose. The blows were light, Socker saw to that, but they brought the blood again. Angelo's arms flailed like windmills, and they made contact only with air. Socker's jabs rained upon the killer's face.

"'Just another Irisher gone!'" Socker breathed into the Tiger's battered ear as they fell into a clinch. The referee pried them apart, and Angelo paused long enough to glance at his corner for instructions.

"Throw 'em!" McBurr pleaded. "Go the route, Angelo!"

Caputo shrugged and tried again. His arms flew about and his head bobbed under Socker's punches. McBurr shouted only half-heartedly, now.

Socker backed away from another charge, peppered Angelo's face with light lefts, and smiled knowingly to the tonso-rially perfect Timothy Figley. Here was really a perfect night.

And then Mr. Dooley heard Mr. Figley scream. It was not a yell or a shout; it was a scream, and into it Timothy poured a world of anguish. Amazed, Socker stepped back from the beaten Tiger and glanced at the owner of the sanctum.

As he did so, something white hurtled through the air and sagged to the floor of the ring. He heard Caputo call out angrily, protestingly, and he felt the referee grasp his arm and push him toward his corner, his right hand held high in token of victory.

## VIII

SOCKER DOOLEY heard the cries of the crowd, the cheers of the Irish-Americans, the complaints of the Tiger. He gripped the top rope and clung there, dazed.

In the center of the ring lay a towel which Rosa Amato had shied into the ring

over the head of Sandy McBurr. It was a token of defeat.

Socker Dooley had won by a technical knock-out! The doubled purse had dwindled to exactly nothing because Angelo Caputo had not lasted fifteen rounds.

Socker moaned and looked across the ring for Figley. Timothy was not in sight, but at that moment a reporter straightened up, and the champion saw Tim's head reposing on the newspaper man's arm.

Gone was the flush of happiness from that knowing face! Vanished was the tan of the great outdoors! Timothy Figley, at sight of that fateful towel thrown by the hand of the "smart" girl, had fallen in a swoon.

Socker glanced back across the ring. Rosa Amato was comforting Angelo. Dooley, as was demanded by the ritual, walked over and spoke to the Tiger.

"I knew he couldn't win after he tried in that last round," Rosa was telling Sandy McBurr. "What do I care about a fight going the limit? What is the limit? With you it's a few rounds; with me it's my man's life! I should live all my days with a face like hamburger steak!"

The girl was ablaze with emotion. She knew that she had triumphed where her husband-to-be had tasted defeat. The crowd about the corner cheered her. She went on:

"I threw in the towel to save the face I've got to look at every morning at breakfast time. We got our money. I have Angelo and Angelo has me. Come on, sweetie. Let's go home."

"She's got Angelo!" Sandy McBurr wailed. "What do I get? I'm the guy's manager."

"How about me?" Socker mumbled. "I get hell, huh?"

"You!" Sandy sneered. "You beat the poor mug almost to death and kept on telling him another Irishman was gone! The boy never made that crack about Tommy Nolan. I made it—for publicity!"

"Why didn't you tip us off, you poor sap," Dooley began hotly. "Then I could have—"

"Lend me that water bucket," a man interrupted from the edge of the ring. "We're having a hard time bringing Mr. Figley to his senses. He must have received a heavy blow!"

## CARILLON

### FAIRY

As an elfin cluster  
Of Bermudian houses  
In the airy  
Glow of Bermuda's moon,  
The luster  
Which is yours,  
O Spring,  
Suddenly awing,  
Rouses  
And allures  
Me and has woven this rune.

### Rimes

Cheap as a flaunted favor,  
Similes rubbed flat  
Like shopworn dimes,  
Now savor  
Of a newness,  
Freshness, that,  
Silvered by your trueness,  
Grace-note our times'  
Harsh tick-tock with lily-belled chimes!

*Richard Butler Glaenzer*

# The Prince's Pearl

HOW MARJORIE SUMMERS BECAME POSSESSED OF A RARE  
JEWEL WHICH IS AN HEIRLOOM IN HER  
FAMILY TO THIS DAY

By J. S. Fletcher

TO us at the Moat Farm, that day, the 2nd of July in the year of our Lord 1644, had been one of as great anxiety as ever I spent in my life. That I can say with knowledge, for I shall be an old woman of three and seventy years come St. Thomas's Day.

To begin with, my father was so ailing in his body that he was obliged to take to his bed ere noon, and Martha Thorpe had a sad time with him before he got some ease. My brother Francis had gone away on business into the Westmorland Fells, and my younger brother, John, was at the wars, fighting for the king. The only man we had about the place, therefore, was Simon Trippett.

Not a very strong garrison, you will say, for a great rambling house like ours—an old woman of sixty, though hale and strong, a young maiden of seventeen, and a man of forty, who, if I must tell the truth of him, was scarce worth his meat at any time. He was the only man we had to live in the house. Our other laborers lived in the village, some distance off.

At nine o'clock that night, my father being then asleep in his chamber upstairs, Martha Thorpe and I were sitting on the settee in the great kitchen, knitting peacefully and diligently, when the door was suddenly opened, and in came Simon Trippett, looking as if he had seen a hundred ghosts. Behind him, through the open door, you could see glimpses of as fair a summer's evening as ever was like to make a man's spirit strong and glad; but Simon's heart had evidently gone down to his shoes and carried all his strength there. His knees knocked together, his head shook, his fingers could not keep still.

"What the good year?" cries Martha Thorpe, staring at him as if she, too, had seen a ghost. "Is aught the matter, man?"

Simon wiped the sweat from his brow. "Matter?" he said. "Matter? We shall all be murdered!"

"Then get thy supper and go to bed, and be murdered there," says Martha, pointing to his supper, which had been ready for him a good half hour. "'Tis the best place to die in."

"Bed?" said Simon, staring about him. "There will be no beds for any one, gentle or simple, to-night, methinks. We are all to be murdered, or worse!"

"Now, may the Lord lend thee sense, thou—" began Martha; but I stopped her from further scolding of poor Simon, whose wits, it was easy to see, were all distraught.

"What is it, Simon?" I said gently. "Tell us."

Simon fumbled with his cap.

"Mistress Marjorie," says he, "'tis this, i' faith—I ha' been to Boroughbridge with the brown mare, and there I did hear that king's men and Parliament men have been gathering 'twixt there and York for days, and to-night they are fighting. I heard the cannon with these ears, as I live, Dame Martha; and there was a man rode post-haste through Boroughbridge, while I stood at the blacksmith's shop, who had come away from Marston village at eight of the clock. He said the moor was black with smoke and red with blood, and that every king's man was dead, and the Parliament men were sweeping the land to kill every mother's son of us, and advising all to make for the west country; and so I jumped on the mare's back and rode for home."

"Sit down and eat thy supper, man," said Martha. "It 'll put some heart in thy belly. Art the faintest-hearted poor atomy that ever I made bread for!"

Now it chanced that while poor Simon was hesitating—and indeed he had drawn nearer to his supper—two gamekeepers who were out on the land near by chanced to discharge their fowling pieces. At the sound thereof he uttered a great cry of—

"They are at hand—they are at hand!"

Then, leaping through the door, he made off across the garth without, as fast as his trembling legs could carry him.

"The Lord help thee for a poor weak mortal!" said Martha. "And here's a pretty to-do if the master chances to be seized with another of his complaints in the night. Not a man about the place to send for the 'pothecary! And—hush!"

In the silence we heard my father's stick, that we had left by his bedside, knocking on the floor of his chamber.

"I warrant me the poor man is took again!" sighed Martha.

Going up to the chamber, we found that she had guessed rightly. My poor father was once more in pain, and for another hour we were busily engaged in endeavoring to give him some ease. At last, as it neared midnight, he fell again into a restful sleep.

It was soon after that, as Martha Thorpe and I tiptoed down the stair, that we heard a low tapping on the door of the stone hall which opened into the apple orchard.

## II

Now if it had been a great, boisterous knock that we had heard, such as he knocks who knows he has a right to admittance, I should not have felt any unusual interest in the sound; but this was a low, stealthy knocking which told us as plainly as possible that whoever knocked was not minded to attract any great attention. Martha and I looked at each other with the same question in our eyes—could it be my brother Francis, who, returning sooner than we had expected, and knowing that my father was but poorly in health, was trying to gain our attention as quietly as possible?

Without putting the question into words, we answered it as silently with a shake of the head, for we knew that Francis had his own way of getting into the house through a window.

"But who, then, can it be, Martha?" said I in a whisper. "Who is there would come knocking at the apple orchard door at this time of night?"

Then a sudden thought came into my head, and I gripped Martha Thorpe's arm in a fashion that at any other moment would have made her cry out.

"Martha! If—if it should be John, back from the war, and perhaps hurt—wounded!"

Before she had time to stop me, I rushed down the stair to the door, and had it open before I had realized the foolishness of what I was doing.

Out of the dark blue dusk of the summer midnight came two cloaked figures, who were within the house, and had closed and bolted the door, before I realized their presence. I fell back against the wainscoting, staring at them.

"Oh!" I said. "I thought it had been my brother John, home from the wars!"

One of the men, a great, broad-shouldered fellow, drew out a paper.

"If this is Master Summer's place, the Moat Farm, mistress," said he, "here is a matter of writing from your brother John that should insure us a welcome. Use speed in reading it, for we are pursued."

Martha had followed me closely down, a candle in her hand. By its light I opened the paper—a rough bit of paper, hastily folded; and the first thing I saw was a faint blood stain.

This is what I read:

DEAR SISTER MARJORIE:

I am wounded, not a great deal, but too much to win home. These are dear friends; harbor them in the secret chamber until they can pass on westward.

Thy brother,  
Jock.

I clasped the paper in my hands and gazed imploringly at the man who had delivered it to me.

"Oh, sir!" I said. "Where is my brother?"

"Four miles the other side Boroughbridge, mistress, and in good hands," he answered hastily. "But this secret chamber—for your brother's sake, hasten!"

Now, I must tell you that our house was an ancient one, which stood halfway 'twixt Boroughbridge and Ripon, in the midst of a somewhat lonely country. I have heard my father say that it was built in the days when Henry VII was King of England;



and I never doubted this, for it was as old a farmstead as any one of our parts had ever seen, full of strange nooks and corners in which we children used to play hide and seek. A great moat ran all round it, but it had long been dug, and could be crossed at several places.

Once, my father said, the farmstead had been the grange of some great house near, but had been sold to his forefathers at the time of the Reformation. In the very middle of the house there was a secret chamber, cunningly devised and entered by a way which was hard to discover, wherein they said the priests used to hide; and that was the place in which my brother bade me to hide these men.

There was a tradition in our family that no member of our household but ourselves should know of it; so I looked at Martha Thorpe, and she knew what I meant.

"Rest content, Mistress Marjorie," she said, handing me the candle. "Put Master John's friends in safe keeping, and I'll to the larder and find meat and drink for them. I'll warrant me they'll give no foul looks at a chine of beef and a tankard of ale."

"That we shall not, mistress!" said the man who had handed me my brother John's letter.

The other man, who had not spoken since his entrance, made me a polite bow, and then favored Martha with another. He turned to me again.

"But this secret chamber?" he said.

There was something in his voice that was of a vast difference to the voice of the other man. His face I could see nothing of, so wrapped about was it—save a pair of burning black eyes, in which I saw pride and sorrow.

"Get the food and drink, Martha," said I.

When she had gone, and was safely in the great kitchen, I had the two men into the secret chamber very quickly. It was a simple trick, that of making its entrance.

Once within, the man who had only spoken once drew a deep breath. He looked round him, and, after a quick glance at me, threw off his cloak.

Then I saw that this was no common man. There was that in his face and eyes which commanded respect and attention. He reminded me of his sacred majesty the king, whom my father had carried me into Ripon to see when he came there in the

year 1629; and yet there was a difference. This was not the king; but, girl though I was, knowing little of the world, I felt some strange conviction that this was one of his majesty's kinsmen.

I think he saw that conviction in my eyes, for suddenly he turned to the other man and laughed.

"Sergeant Bloodyer," said he, "this young lady hath a pretty discernment, and I would rather throw myself on her mercy than let her remain under a false impression. Mistress Marjorie, your good brother John, Sergeant Bloodyer, and myself chanced by the fortunes of war to be thrown into one another's company in the retreat from Marston Moor this evening, and your brother was conducting me hither to this very safe retreat when he was wounded by our pursuers. I am his majesty's nephew, Prince Rupert."

I made him the best curtsy I knew of, trying to ape the fine madam whom I had seen making obeisance to the king in Ripon market place. He smiled and bowed his head.

"We are escaping to the west, Mistress Marjorie," said he, "and for to-night, or for a few hours, at any rate, I must be safely hidden. There are pursuers on our track—they were close upon us when we abandoned our horses in a safe place and came hither across the meadow. If they track us here, think you you can keep the secret of the secret chamber safe?"

"Unless they pull the whole house down, sir," said I, "they'll never find a way in here. Our own servants have never known the secret."

The man whom the prince had called Sergeant Bloodyer gave a great sigh of content, and, as if he were suddenly satisfied, dropped into a chair; but he suddenly started up again.

"Your highness's pardon," he began.

His highness laughed, and pushed the man back. Then he looked at me with that rare smile of his. He had the darkest eyes of any man I ever chanced across.

"If we might sup, Mistress Marjorie?" he said.

### III

WHEN I had carried them meat and drink to the secret chamber, and had made them as comfortable as I could for the time they must needs spend there, I went back to Martha Thorpe in the great kitchen.

Although 'twas summertime, she had lighted a fire, and was making herself a cup of spiced ale.

"For indeed," said she, "we are like to have a nice night of it, what with master ill in his bed, poor man, and runaway soldiers knocking at the door and seeking shelter; and one requires a little of something comfortable to keep up one's heart. As for that poor body of a Simon Trippett, Lord knows where he may not have got to! A likely drowned himself out of fear in the pond, or ran all the way home to his mother, the widow woman of Whizley, poor soul, that has nothing left in the world but him, and—"

At that moment, before Martha Thorpe could say more, there was a strange scraping sound in one of the great cupboards which stood on either side of the fireplace, and its door opened gently, and out came Simon Trippett himself!

"What the good year?" says Martha, dropping her cup of spiced ale on the sanded hearthstone. "Ye good-for-nothing fly-by-night! How came you into that cupboard?"

Simon Trippett made no answer, but came tiptoeing up to me and put his finger on his lips. He looked at Martha and then at me, and he smiled at us in a fashion that made me wonder.

"Hist!" says he. "I am not such a fool as you seem to think, Mistress Martha. I can hear a thing and see a thing, and keep my own counsel about it—if I am paid to do so."

"What are you talking about, Simon?" said I, with some impatience, for I could not make out his meaning. "What is all this you prate of?"

"Prate here, prate there," says Simon. "Well I wot that he they call Rupert of the Rhine is in this house. Being marrow to the king's majesty, he must carry a mort of money on him!"

Here was pretty news! Young as I was, I saw that the only thing to do was to exercise one's woman's wit on Simon Trippett.

"Money," said I, "is an excellent thing to have, Simon, isn't it?"

He rubbed his hands and grinned like the knavish fool that he was.

"How shall we get it?" said I.

"What the—" began Martha Thorpe; but I gave her a sharp glance, and she suddenly saw what I was after.

"What have you got to say, Simon?" I said, speaking to him as if he had been the king's own man of law.

"Why," says he, whispering his words, "'tis this way, Mistress Marjorie. When I ran away, affrighted by the sound of musketry, I wandered me down to the highway where the four crossroads are. There, hidden in the hedge bottom, I hears two horsemen come up. They bestowed their horses in Dead Man's Copse, and I heard them talk of the Moat Farm, and one man called the other 'highness.' Upon that, other men came up with a great jingling of harness and clank and clink of swords and spurs. They pull together at the crossroads, and there is talk of Prince Rupert, and which way has he gone, and shall they take this road or that, and this, that, and the other; and all the time there was his royalty a hiding in the copse with t'other man, and me a sitting in the hedge bottom! In the end one lot goes on toward Ripon, and one turns back to Boroughbridge, and the man that seemed to master the lot says, 'Search every house in the neighborhood,' says he. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! 'Aye!' says I. 'Seek and ye shall find, as parson says, but it 'll take some seeking before ye find our secret chamber!' Said I not well, Mistress Marjorie?"

"Excellently well, Simon," said I. "And then—"

"I waits until the pursuers had gone, after hearing them say grumbly that 'twas poor work hunting princes. Then I followed his royalty here and watched you let him in by the apple orchard door, and well I wot you have him hidden in the secret chamber; and being marrow to the king, he must, as I say, carry a mort of money on him, Mistress Marjorie—a mort of money!"

I glanced at Martha Thorpe. Her eyes were as round as saucers, her mouth wide open.

"A matter of ten golden guineas now, Mistress Marjorie," said Simon, his face working with excitement. "Ten golden guineas not to ride down to Boroughbridge and bring the pursuers on him! I could have told them there and then, but, thinks I, a king's man is likely to have more money about him than a Parliament man, and I could—"

"But if he will not give you the golden guineas, Simon?" I said.

"I can ride down to the troopers at Boroughbridge in ten minutes," says he, and I saw he meant it. His fingers began to twitch again. "Ten golden guineas—a mort o' money!" says he. "Get some out of him for yourself, too, Mistress Marjorie. A prince—'tis not oft a prince rides our way!"

"The poor soul!" says Martha Thorpe, under her breath.

What to do? That was what I was asking myself. Here was this dolt of a Simon Trippett thrown clean out of his simple mind; and he was a strong man, and we were two weak women.

"A mort o' money—a mort o' money!" he repeated. "They do say the king's own self always carries a hundred guineas in his breeches pocket. Ten golden guineas, mistress!"

At that moment there came a loud knock on the door of the great kitchen. Simon Trippett leaped as if he had been shot this time, instead of hearing shots fired. He threw up his arms.

"The troopers!" he screamed. "The troopers! I' faith, Mistress Marjorie, 'twas not I that told them—'twas not I—'twas not I!"

But I had him by the shoulder and was dragging him out.

"Quick, Simon, quick!" I said. "This way—this way! You shall have your ten golden guineas, but come with me—quick!"

For the first time in the history of our family I broke the tradition of the secret chamber; for I took Simon Trippett into it.

Prince Rupert and Sergeant Bloodyer were at their supper. I pushed Simon into the very midst of them, head and crop.

"Keep him quiet," said I. "Keep him quiet, if you have to kill him, for now's the time!"

Then I rushed back to the great kitchen like a mad thing.

#### IV

I WAS quiet and staid and gentle enough—a much-wronged, disturbed maiden—when, a few minutes later, after repeated knockings, and timid demands on my part to know who knocked, I opened the door.

In the yellow light of the candle which I held above my head I saw a ring of men's faces. They were hard enough and stern enough, but as I looked from one to the

other the hardness and the sternness seemed to die away.

"What is it, gentlemen?" said I. "I pray you, make no noise or disturbance. My father is grievously sick, and there are but myself and our serving woman, Martha, in the house."

One of the men came within. He glanced around him, then looked back at me.

"You have had no men asking refuge here to-night, young mistress?" he asked.

He looked at me with straight eyes. I looked back at him with a direct straightness, and I told the one lie that I ever told in my life.

"No!"

He uncovered his head and withdrew; but another man spoke.

"Let us see the sick father! It may all be a trick."

Then the first man spoke again, pointing to a younger man:

"Cornet Trimblethwaite!" He turned to me with a bow. "Let this gentleman see your father, mistress," he said.

I led Cornet Trimblethwaite up the stair. Every step we took I took on tip-toe, turning with a finger on my lip, to caution him to silence. He was a docile and sympathetic young gentleman.

Within my father's chamber I held the candle over my father's head. Thank God, he was asleep!

"There, sir," I whispered.

He bowed his head and glanced at me as he did it. Then we tiptoed out of the chamber and down the stairs, and tiptoed out of the great kitchen. The man who had first entered came forward. He looked at Cornet Trimblethwaite inquiringly, and then at me.

"Yes, sir, it is as she told us," said Cornet Trimblethwaite.

And in another minute Martha and I had fastened the door upon them.

#### V

AN hour before the dawn on that soft summer night I went to the secret chamber; and there I found a sight that had surely moved Old Noll himself to laughter. The prince and Sergeant Bloodyer, having eaten and drunk their fill, had apparently invited Simon Trippett to satisfy whatever appetite he had; and this he had evidently done so heartily that he had fallen asleep in an easy-chair between them, and lay there, with his hands folded across his

stomach, and his legs stretched out, snoring loud enough to wake the dead. On one side sat Prince Rupert, and on the other the sergeant, both silent.

They sprang to their feet as I entered, and in a word or two I told them what had happened.

"And if your highness is minded to make a clear escape now," I said, "I can show you a way through our stack garth and across the fields that will bring you to your horses, if they still be there, or to Ripon, with a full assurance that none shall see you."

"Mistress Marjorie," said the prince, taking my hand, "I am your debtor for life, for I was hard pressed, and the few hours' respite has saved me. You will keep this little trinket in remembrance of tonight—and of me?"

Herewith he put into my hand this pearl, set, you see, in fine gold, which we shall keep in the family as long as the family lasts.

"And it will be no shame to you, either," he says, "that a prince has kissed your cheek—and your lips—for gratitude!"

"But tell me, sir," said I, their kindnesses being over, "what am I to do with this fellow?"

And I pointed to Simon Trippett, still fast asleep and snoring.

"Let me run him through with my sword," growled Sergeant Bloodyer. "'Tis all he's worth."

But Prince Rupert laughed and put a purse in my hand.

"You will easily buy his silence with this, Mistress Marjorie," he said. "Tell him he had a strange dream, and had doubtless drunk too much strong ale. And now, sergeant—"

I showed them the way I had spoken of. There was a faint glow of color in the eastern sky across the gables of the barns and granaries, and a cock crowed from the farmyard.

They went away with the purpling morning shadow. I watched them until I could not tell which was shadow and which was man.

And then I hurried back into the house and kissed the blood stain on my poor Jock's hastily scrawled letter.

## NEW YORK

NEW YORK, thou mightiest city of life,  
Heir of no nation, child of the age,  
Born of man's fancy, proud in thy majesty,  
Loveliest queen, star of life's stage.

Rivers flow down with their fresh mountain water  
To mingle and churn in the brine at thy door;  
The noble Atlantic, alluring, romantic,  
Spreads its naked expanse thy towers before.

Ships wait in thy harbor, cargo and deck full  
Bearing from countries remote o'er the sea;  
Trains speed the countryside, swift as a giant stride,  
Eager faces and lips paying tribute to thee.

Deep in the heart of thee, guider of destiny,  
Mountainous buildings leap up toward the sky—  
Cañons designed by man, lights which the heavens scan—  
Knowest thou why?

Greatest joy in thy bosom and greatest despair,  
Colossal triumph with ruin unfurled;  
Profound thy mystery, drawing all hearts to thee,  
Queen city, lodestar of the world!

Virginia Goff



# A Good Lawyer

THIS ABLE MAN WAS TOO TENDER-HEARTED FOR THE RIGORS  
OF HIS CAREER, BUT HE MADE A COMPROMISE  
WITH FATE

By Charles Bromfield

"AND, in consequence, you are sentenced to five years—"

The conditions of the sentence were not heard, for the criminal had gone livid, and was screaming, with wild gesticulations at the prosecuting attorney.

"I'll get you for this!" he yelled. "I'll kill you when I get out!"

A policeman clapped a huge red hand over the threatening mouth, and, with the aid of a colleague, he whisked the young desperado out of the court room.

The prosecuting attorney assembled his papers. A scene like this was not new to him; it was only a part of the job upon which he was so dependent, though he disliked it intensely. As he tucked the brief away in his folio, he heard men near him saying: "Quick work!" "Brilliant!" and the like.

Some of these court room spectators came to him and shook his hand, but he did not see them. His mind was still occupied with the threatening criminal.

Elbowing his way out, he reached the street and decided not to return to his office. Whether the accused persons were guilty or not guilty, he had had enough of destroying their hopes, of bottling them up in penitentiaries, while their families were left to starve.

As often before, he tried to console himself with the thought that the law was a necessity, and that he only represented the law. But he never succeeded, because he realized, as well as his wife, his friends, and also the newspaper reporters, that it was not in his nature to convict and to condemn.

His ability was the only reason for his continual reappointment, and, of course, re-

appointment meant certain income. There appeared no way for him to get out of the rut.

He decided to go home and work among the flowers. That occupation always brought forgetfulness to him.

## II

ROBERT TOWNSEND was not a coward, but that afternoon he constantly saw through the maze of hollyhocks, Canterbury bells, and larkspur a livid face with venomous eyes glaring at him. Again those shouted threats seemed to ring in his ears.

He tried to dismiss the matter as an extraordinary occurrence, but it would not be so dismissed. Details of the trial kept returning to his mind; certain of the witnesses persisted in testifying again.

Undoubtedly the man was guilty. Then why couldn't his prosecutor enjoy the afternoon? Why did the sweltering atmosphere of the court room seem to cling to him among his sweet-scented flowers?

Was it fear? He smiled to himself. He had never known this emotion during his twenty years in office. Threatened time and again for the merciless certainty with which he convicted, he had gone on convicting, unconcerned.

He made his way along the sunken stone path of the little garden, carefully weeding and trimming, yet compelled to speculate on the intensity of that young criminal's hatred.

Perhaps the youth could love as deeply as he could hate. Then he must have suffered greatly when torn from those he loved; they might have been his mother, his wife, his children. But it was the law that seized him—and the law was hard.

Prosecuting Attorney Townsend threw down his trowel and went indoors long before it had grown too dark to work.

Mrs. Townsend was not clever enough to follow the moves and counter moves of her husband's profession. On the other hand, the sensational and the morbid had a most depressing effect on her mind. Consequently, trials were never discussed in the family circle.

That night at dinner, however, her husband broke the rule. If he could tell some one about the trial, he believed he could get it out of his mind.

"He was a dark-complexioned young man," he said, passing his hand over his troubled brow. "A fine-looking chap, too, when he wasn't scowling at me."

"Why should he scowl at you, dear?" his wife asked, anxiously.

"Because I destroyed all his evidence as fast as the witnesses came up," Townsend replied, apparently without pride in the accomplishment.

"And that was bad for him, I suppose."

"Yes, it was, Mary."

"That would send him to prison, wouldn't it?"

"It would help to, dear," he replied. But, now that he had started talking about the trial, only remorse seemed to come from telling her. He begun to discuss, instead, the plans for laying out the garden the following year, and the selection of the flowers that were to be planted.

"What did the young man do, Robert?" his wife inquired unexpectedly after a few minutes.

"Oh, he broke into a delicatessen store over on the East Side and assaulted the owner."

"Did he steal anything?"

"Yes, dear."

"What did he steal?"

"Food."

"And how long did they send him to prison for?"

"Five years," Townsend replied, refusing the *entrée*.

"That seems a long time for stealing food," she murmured, bending over her plate.

Townsend started to explain that the long sentence was really the penalty for assault; but what was the use? His gentle wife would only understand that the poor devil was hungry!

"What was his name, Robert?"

"John Corson. He threatened to kill me."

The next morning Robert Townsend resigned his position as prosecuting attorney.

### III

IN the same county where Townsend, as a prosecuting attorney, had so brilliantly convicted, he was now more brilliantly freeing men accused of crime.

Although his hair was tinged with gray and he appeared heavier in figure, he felt years younger. His reputation as a lawyer was such that now he could pick and choose his cases.

If, in the opinion of his friends, he worked harder than he should, it was only because his profession now appeared to him in a new light, and he practiced it with all the enthusiasm of youth.

The Townsends still lived in the same house, but what had once been the little garden was now swallowed up in an expanse of lawn, sunken pools, pergolas, and rose trellises. His success as a lawyer had given him this garden, but permitted him no time to enjoy it.

Into the long hours of the night he would stay at his office, thinking, planning, amid great clouds of cigar smoke, how he could save a life or gain a liberty. Scarcely five years had passed since his resignation as prosecuting attorney.

It was on such a night as this that Mrs. Townsend was reading while she waited for her husband. The bell of the front door rang through the house.

Mrs. Townsend laid down her book with a sigh and made her way down the unlighted stairway, wondering who it could be at that hour of the night. She flashed on the light and opened the door.

In the brilliant glare of the porch light stood a shabby figure, hat in hand. She noticed that the man was slightly bent. Fixing his dark eyes on her, he inquired for her husband.

"I expect him home any minute now," Mrs. Townsend replied, looking past him down the long avenue of elms. "What is your name, please?"

"John Corson."

Mrs. Townsend remembered that name, and a tremor of fright passed through her. She thought quickly of a defensive subterfuge.

"He might be very late," she said,

gradually drawing back into the doorway. "Won't you leave a message?"

The ex-convict shrugged his bowed shoulders. His eyes seemed to flash with malicious intent.

"No; I want to see him right away," he insisted.

"Please come inside and wait," she suggested then.

She hoped that she could rush out, meet Robert, and warn him.

Her suggestion seemed to embarrass the man. He stirred uneasily, and, for the first time, took his gaze off the attorney's wife. Then he muttered something unintelligible, and was gone into the darkness. The crunch of his feet on the gravel slowly died out.

In that moment Mrs. Townsend thought she would scream, but she realized the folly of it. She rapidly calculated her chances of passing the murderer in the darkness to warn her husband.

No! There was the telephone. Why had she not thought of that?

She gave the number to the operator and waited interminable minutes for an answer. She implored the girl to ring again and again. There was only stillness. Townsend had left his office.

Looking once more into the night, the wife tried to discern the figure of her husband's enemy lurking among the trees. She could see nothing; the rustling elms made the only sound.

Again she hurried to the telephone. "Quick," she cried, striving to keep

hysteria from her voice, "give me the police!"

She felt herself losing control over her faculties. Tears began to stream down her face, and she broke into hysterical laughter. The telephone receiver dropped from her weakening grasp. She fainted.

#### IV

It was Robert, her husband, bending over her. She reached out and felt his arm. Yes, it was Robert. He was saying something to her. Then he shook her.

"What in Heaven's name is wrong?" he cried.

"Robert, are you all right? What did he do? Where is he?" She tried to struggle to her feet, looking wildly around her.

"Mary, for God's sake, explain! What do you mean?"

"That awful man, that ex-convict, John Corson."

Townsend almost laughed. "It's all right, dear," he said, composing his features. "Wait a minute."

He carried her to the sofa and placed a pillow behind her head.

"He is in trouble again, dear," he explained, gently stroking her temples. "I've been talking to him, and he wants me to defend him."

"But, Robert, he said he was going to kill you when he got out!"

Her husband chuckled.

"I know, dear, but now he says: 'Why kill a good lawyer?'"

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#### SPRING DAWN

I TAKE no joy in the sudden darts that sting  
The white-towered tops of buildings to pale gold gleams  
In the dripping dawn, nor in the mist that streams  
Around their heights in vanishing swirl and ring.  
Only last year there was another spring  
When you and love and you were all my themes;  
And a cool light filled the pale house of my dreams,  
Filled now with the dust of sad remembering.

Though I have shut you from my house of lies,  
You still come, piercing through the close-barred door,  
And move through all those empty rooms from floor  
To barren floor; and dusty dreams arise,  
Stirred by a pale, lost light I have known before—  
And in my heart an aching something cries.

*Johann Cebal*

# The Fare Sex

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE—THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF CLEM COOLEY, PROFESSIONAL CHAUFFEUR—AN ADONIS AT THE WHEEL, WHO REVEALS THE INSIDE STORY OF A RICH AND RECKLESS AUTOMOBILITY

By William Jackson

A GENTLEMAN prefers a blond girl, I've heard some guys saying; but a lady prefers a sheik, blond or not; or what they used to call a caveman. Just why it is, I can't figure out.

But nobody can figure out any why of the fare sex, so I say nothing and let good enough go. It's hard guessing at men who know their own mind, without guessing at women who don't know it.

Besides, I'm not a high-brow, but from Pittsburgh, and didn't go to college. But from the outside I'm not a low-brow.

A classical forehead, rich, young Mrs. Van Puyster said I had, and ought to wear an olive wreath like the Greeks of old. And I didn't understand it, and she explained it.

I guess it's like Bert Green says—he's my lawyer friend—women's explanations breed interrogations, so I'm no better off. Mrs. Van Puyster was my first New York experience, but I'll start at the beginning to show how I'm rising.

I am Clem Cooley, and my profession is a chauffeur, and I started out to be the private kind till the night Dr. Kirby, my first boss, and I were feeling good in the dining room, and Mrs. Kirby was out of town. At first he felt better and better, but after that he felt worse and worse, and I asked what he'd do for a patient like that, and he said he'd give them larger doses of the same.

Which I was already thinking, and there's plenty left for it, but just after that Mrs. Kirby comes in. She wouldn't give me a reference, and I had to drive a truck. All for doctoring a doctor.

Then, to top it off, a girl and I had a

fuss, which don't clear the atmosphere any. But I wasn't crazy about her, and glad it happened, because the bright lights—that's just a name for New York—called me. So I came.

But New York don't dazzle you like you thought it would. Maybe it's because Manhattan is more like a world than a city; but anyway, things that would be wonderful in Pittsburgh don't seem so wonderful in New York, but natural.

First I answered an ad put in by a character analyst to tell you what you ought to do. All my qualities showed him I'm a real estate salesman. I tried for a job at it, but they told me to try back in Pittsburgh.

Then I tackled a vocational specialist, to tell what is my life's work. He said I'm an engineer. Maybe he's right, after I learn it, but I decided to do what I know now, drive a motor car.

So I asked a taxi driver how to get a job in New York if you don't know the streets and don't have a New York reference. He said to say nothing about the first, and for a couple of bucks he'd get me a fist full of the second, which I did and he did.

But stay out of Brooklyn, he said. I did, because it's better to play safe in New York and stay empty, than get lost in Brooklyn with a full cab.

The taxi company said my references were O. K., and my driving the same, and they'd see if my collecting would be. It was.

But what helped me a lot was not knowing where on a street is the number, and sometimes not knowing where is the street



if it's not numbered. And also working at night when the men fares were with their girls, and either glad of the extra ride or ashamed to say anything, though some guys had a hard struggle to keep quiet.

Then late one night a couple came out the exit of a club. It's the kind where you go in one place to please yourself, and come out another door to fool the prohibition agents. A taxi driver is out of luck if he don't know it, and waits for his fares at the first place, out of sight of the second door.

Well, this couple was only half on their feet. I mean, the lady was walking, and the gentleman trying to keep from falling. We got him in, and the lady gave a number on East Seventy-Ninth Street.

When we got him out he was like Dr. Kirby, and I carried him in; and in the light she was beautiful. She stared at me, and I the same at her.

And I thought I was a fool to like her, because there she was, in a one-thousand-dollar dress and a beautiful duplicate apartment. And there I was, a taxi driver in dirty clothes and a cheap hotel. The sign said so, twelve dollars a week with running water, the bathroom on the floor below.

I didn't know then that I'm a sheik, or like one, and couldn't get why she took to me so. Well, we had some talk, and then something to eat, and drank a little private stock she brought along from the club for him next morning.

I hated to leave her all alone with her husband, with him like he was. But then he might be the same as Dr. Kirby, who woke up O. K. the next day.

I was to meet her later about something important, and left. I couldn't walk home on the clouds, but I felt like I was driving through the milky way, and just then I hit an early morning milk wagon.

I backed up and beat it, and wasn't arrested, because the night was cold, and I guess the cop on the beat was having something hot in a restaurant. The milk froze on the windshield, and was hard to get off, because there's not enough hot water in the radiator.

## II

I WASN'T sleeping much the next day anyway, but Pete Cody came in, a friend from Pittsburgh. We were not such friends there, but he's very friendly in New York,

because the one thousand five hundred dollars was gone which was left him a month ago. He gave it away, mostly, he said, to head waiters and such, who now pretended they never saw him before.

And Bert says that in New York gratitude comes after gratuity; and there's plenty of flowers in the city, but they say it with silver.

Which is what Pete needed, so we went to his room, and I brought back three nice day suits and an evening one, and I don't know what all, for twenty-five dollars for him to get back home on. It was my lucky night.

The size was right, collar and everything, except the pants were too baggy, but Pete said that's the new style and they're wearing them that way now. Well, it's all right for women to be particular about what they're wearing now, but when a man fusses about his clothes, he should make a good job of it and take to skirts.

I called up the taxi company and explained I'd be sick for the night, and the man on the phone said I ought to join the weather bureau. And I said why, and he said, "Because you know just when a thing's going to happen, and exactly how long it 'll last."

And the funny part was, by that time I wasn't feeling so well. Maybe a man can make himself sick if he's fool enough to think about it. Of course women do it easy, and enjoy it.

Well, I dressed up better than ever before, but felt like a gob at first. The tube stuff for the hair, which Pete Cody threw in for good measure, wouldn't make mine slick back, but waved it worse. The gloves would have been too small, but Pete said they're not to wear, but to hold like you're about to put them on.

Well, if Claudine—that's Mrs. Van Puyster's own name—fell for me the night before, she just stayed down for the count when she saw me at the drug store on Times Square. You know the place.

She was still beautiful in the daylight, and rushed to me and said: "Clem, you look *wonderful*!" which was when my head started turning, but I never let it turn all the way. Of course I had girls crazy about me in Pittsburgh, but these small town skirts don't count when you can knock them down right on Broadway.

We went into a movie show to talk, and I don't remember a word the picture said.

It's a different kind of picture; about a poor but pretty saleslady in a department store who is a good girl, and finally gets rescued by a rich gentleman, and is soon the leading lady in a musical comedy.

Claudine said her husband and her just got back from Palm Beach, and didn't take the car out yet, and need a chauffeur. "I want *you!*" she added.

And I was to come next day and get the job, and then be measured for a uniform. She laughed, and said it 'll cost a lot, because you're no Lily Putian, which I didn't quite get, but tried to laugh like I did.

It all came out like she said, and I phoned that wise guy at the taxi company, and said: "I'm taking your advice," and he said, "What advice?"

And I said, "About joining the weather bureau. They're having me drive a Rolls Royce on Fifth Avenue to create a breeze." He invited me to go to a different climate, if you understand what I mean without saying hell.

There was only one trouble about my new job, but not a big one, and that's about my salary. Claudine forgot to mention it, and I was too crazy about her to ask it.

She said I'm more like one of the family than a chauffeur, but Royal—that's her husband—must not see me look at her like that. I didn't know I was looking at her like that. But it came out all right, because she pays everybody from her allowances, and said she would cut down somewhere else.

I moved to a nice hotel near the garage, with a bathtub in the room or next to it, and a friend from Pittsburgh, Phil Neal, is living here, too. He was a little wild back there, but came to New York and settled down in Wall Street, which means down town New York, just like Broadway means New York, except Brooklyn.

"Still chauffeuring?" he said, and I said "Yes," and he said he would see me again some time. We didn't have much chance to talk for awhile; he's always in a hurry.

But one night I invited him up, and he asked where did I get it, and before the bottle is finished I told him all about my new job. After that we're good friends, even more than in Pittsburgh.

He will give me all the inside dope, and I'll make a killing and can marry Claudine. Good tips are scarce, but being such friends he's glad to tip me off for nothing.

I carry Royal upstairs a lot, because he

drinks it like the beginning of prohibition, when everybody, not knowing for sure when or where the next was coming from, drank it all up at once. But a lot of people kept it up even after they knew better, and Royal was one. Claudine hides some from him, which is not easy around a lot of servants who don't drink a drop in their references.

Winnie, that's Claudine's maid, helps hide it, and a little extra for me. By that, I knew for sure Winnie liked me, which I can't help.

And she wouldn't take a drop when she delivered it, but begged me to get another job. That's the way women are; get sore if you don't quit one job, raise the devil if you don't find another.

I was sorry it all happened, but Claudine saw that Winnie liked me, so Winnie is the one to quit. She told Claudine that it won't keep her from seeing me Sundays.

Claudine got mad and said: "Oh, yes, it will! I'll see to that!" Winnie tried to pull her hair out, and I guess I know something about how sweet a woman can be one minute and how different the next, almost like it was somebody else entirely.

But afterward Claudine was sorry about it, and said she did it for me. Having maids running after me wouldn't help me any; it might keep me from getting anywhere.

She cried about losing her temper, and said Royal and everything had got on her nerves, but was all right soon and gave me a little present. But Monday, instead of Sunday, is my day off after that, which shows if women played baseball they might get runners on bases, but not off.

Winnie took it pretty hard, but the fur coat that I bought her helped some. Bert says sometimes a woman's fur coat covers a man's transgression, but that don't fit my case exactly.

Winnie is not so beautiful, but little and sweet except when she's mad, and only eighteen and alone in the world. And she's pleased about the little apartment, and a man if he's a man ought to help a woman in trouble, which is the way I am.

Phil saw Claudine's present to me, and also knew what I've been saving. He said he got the best tip he ever knew, and there's just room for one more because too much bear pressure will turn the tide.

He's like me, he says, always willing to help out a friend, and I'll be rich and can marry Winnie, and she won't have to work

as a maid. But I don't want to marry Winnie, but just help her out like a relative or something.

### III

By this time you see how fast I rose. It's not everybody can come from Pittsburgh and succeed like I did, though I don't think I'm through yet. It's a true sign a man's got something in him if he's never satisfied, which I wasn't.

And it's one reason why I'm writing this biography, to show what a man can do if he'll only park his taxi near a star. Some people who try it get in trouble from not watching the traffic signs and things.

Of course not every man has got my looks. But everybody's got something, if it's only going to college.

If a man's got looks he's lucky, and his love affairs help out his business affairs. But if he's only got brains, even if he makes money, it don't do him any good, because the women like the money but not him.

And, anyway, by the time most men get rich they're run down, and I don't see a pretty woman yet running after a run down man. I mean, for him. His money, yes.

Now isn't a man a fool to be like that? Even if he marries the lady he's bought her. But excuse me from sex talk, and I won't say any more about this subject.

So I am happy my career's all fixed and fits so well to my ideas. I'm glad I don't have to make a boob of myself like most men, slaving for years to make money so some pretty woman will pretend to love them.

Besides, if nature makes a man a shiek he's crazy not to let the ladies like him. A man should follow his natural talents. They wouldn't have been given to me if I was meant to be only a banker.

Then I've been thinking all about it. What would ladies do if they can't find somebody they like best, but go around unhappy because men making so much money are not attractive like I am?

It's the same way with affections. If a person has strong ones they can't help it, and why should I try, even?

My idea is a person like that is a favorite of nature, and who wants to be a clam? The only trouble is clammy people want everybody else to be clams, and not knowing what a thrill is they don't want anybody to have one.

But there's one thing sure: I've never yet seen a man who is not too fat complain that his wife don't understand him. Bert is right. One gymnasium can iron out more misunderstandings than a half dozen divorce courts.

And Royal Van Puyster needed to be in a gymnasium, only he has to get off hard drink first or find a strait-jacket soon. He's a real nice fellow, I found out.

But he had no business treating Claudine like that, sick when he's not drunk and drunk when he's not sick. A man is crazy if he stays like that and thinks his wife maybe won't like somebody else.

You'll be surprised now. I was. Claudine still loved Royal and only him, but of course she was mighty unhappy.

And I was sorry for her and for him, too, and one day I asked him why not let me drive him up to his wilderness lodge upstate to rest up? Of course he knew what I meant, but he couldn't get mad at me.

"It's a go!" he said. "Throw what we need in the car, and get me in before I change my mind. Don't bring any stuff."

Which I knew better than to obey about the hootch. Halfway up he wanted to come right back, and I gave him some.

"You know something about this drinking business," he said. I told him: "Yes, I do. Will you let me manage it?"

He agreed, and I told him: "I'm going to ease you off it gradually, but keep out a little which some day you'll want and can't have. Then you'll fight for it, and I'll have to lick you and repeat it maybe two or three times. Then I'll tramp off with you in the mountains when you feel not quite as bad as before."

Which all happened, but I didn't know he's a good boxer. He knocked me out in the first fight, and used up all the whisky bringing me to.

Then he taught me boxing, and we hunted and tramped, and then one night he wanted to see Claudine. I wanted to come back, too, so we beat it, driving all night.

On the way I told him about Phil Neal's tip, and investing sixteen hundred in it.

"What's his other name?" he said, and I said "Why?"

"Clem," he said, "when you sleep a few hours at your hotel and find Neal checked out for parts unknown, come around to the house. But you might see what name he was registered under."

Royal was right.

They were at dinner together, the first time in a long time. Claudine said: "We want to thank you," and Royal said: "You're damn right we do; like this!" He handed me two checks.

"This covers Phil," he said, "and this covers the three weeks in the woods."

One check was for sixteen hundred and the other was for three thousand.

"But better stay off tips," Royal said. Then Claudine said he should invest it for me, he knows how so well, and he did.

Then one day a lady called to see Claudine, and her little car got out of fix at the curb, and I drove her home. Mrs. Brewster is her name; she's Claudine Van Puyster's cousin.

I couldn't help noticing her; she's so nice and has such soft, sad-looking eyes. We went through the park and she wanted to stop and breathe the fresh air, and we started talking. I'm crazy about her, and she knows it, I think.

The same night I called on Winnie for a kind of good-by call, on account of being crazy about Mrs. Brewster, and I used my key to surprise her. I did. Also somebody else.

But Royal was wrong about Phil Neal. That apartment was not "parts unknown" to me. And I'm glad I learned boxing, and could end it soon because Phil is no Lily Putian either.

By that time Winnie is screaming, and kicking, and pulling my hair. Then she helped him up, with such hard names for me that I'm in a daze like I'm the one knocked out.

But soon I'm thinking clear about Mrs. Brewster, and beside her Winnie looks like what she is, a maid. And if Phil thinks she likes him permanently, and she thinks he likes her at all, I can't think up a better punishment than to let them go their way together.

So I just got my hat and walked out without a word. What's the use wasting breath? But some people fuss and carry on and give people their minds and argue, and when they're all through they're no better off, and if it's a woman she's nervous and all.

But I guess there's two sides to everything, which was like Royal wanting me to stay in his employ and giving good reasons, while I was thinking up other good reasons why I should take the job Mrs. Brewster offered. But Claudine settled it,

because she said Royal needed a longer rest and they had decided to go to Europe.

It seems dangerous for him to go to Europe to get over booze fighting, but Claudine said that's just the thing to do. They've got so much stuff over there you don't think about it or worry about it.

I'm glad they're going, because I'm crazy about Estelle—that's Mrs. Brewster's own name. I think she is, too, about me, but I don't know.

Royal said they will keep right on investing for me, and his partner, Mr. Chase, will take good care of it. They're a big firm belonging to the Stock Exchange.

And Mr. Chase would like to catch Phil because, he said, Phil took his leave like a Frenchman. I'm not sure what that is, but guess he didn't give a receipt.

But I didn't say anything, because I figure I ought to let him suffer awhile with Winnie. A man like him in jail wouldn't have a care, but would start figuring better ways and different means to be crooked.

No, I'd leave it to Winnie because the law don't know all the tricks. Maybe it can give you what's coming to you, but some women can give you more.

When I told Royal and Claudine good-by they were sorry to lose me, but Royal said I can have a job with him any time I want it. I was pleased about my new job, but felt sorry about leaving. Which made me think of a funny thing that women do: cry for joy.

We stayed on the big boat so long we nearly got left, which would not be so bad, Estelle said so her sister Ruby couldn't hear her, I think. "But some day," Estelle said, stringing out the day and then stopped.

I'll explain it. She meant some day after we're married we won't have to get off, but will go all the way to Europe or Southampton.

And I said: "I get you;" and she said: "Clem, I'm fond of you, so don't be angry with me, but you're such a nice boy you ought not to use expressions like 'I get you.' That is slang, and I must help you to improve your English or engage a tutor for you."

I didn't get mad, but was really glad. In my profession of professional chauffeur good language is important, and if a man can't improve himself he can't improve anything.

So I said: "Estelle, I'll learn anything



if you'll teach me," which pleased her, and I think she would have kissed me in the taxi, but couldn't because of Ruby. And it wouldn't be the first time somebody got kissed in a taxi, but I guess you've heard this rumor before.

Estelle lives in her own big house. It's better than living in an apartment house, where you don't meet your neighbors, but get acquainted with their ways through the walls, or across the court if you pay less rent.

All the servants live in Estelle's house, and the chauffeur, too. I have a fine place; it's beautiful, with two rooms and a bathroom as big as a bedroom.

But it's not the same place the other chauffeur lived in, which was on the top floor where the servants live. And I think they don't like it, because they think I think I'm above them, and they think right.

The reason I think I'm above them is because I want to be, and they don't. But I'm not the kind to rub it in, so I let them whisper, but I act like they're not.

I don't try to lord it over anybody, because if you do it means you know you're in their same class and trying to hide it. When I told Estelle this, she said it's certainly true; it's a lesson for a lot of people she knows, and maybe herself when she's shopping and holds her nose kind of high before the salesgirls.

And the only one that liked me at first, Olive, who took care of my rooms, was the worst of all when I wouldn't be crazy about her, and quit. She's another Winnie, all right, and I wonder if I'll hear from her again.

#### IV

RUBY lives with Estelle sometimes, and sometimes in her studio in Greenwich Village. It is not a village, but used to be, and if some one didn't tell you you'd think you're in New York.

Somebody said it's more of an idea than a place, but anyway, it's a place where a lot of people try to live on ideas, and ideas are all right food for the head. Also it's where girls first cut their hair short and men always let theirs grow long.

But of course Ruby don't have to live on ideas. She's got a kitchenette to mix cocktails in, and when she gets real hungry she comes home.

When she told me about her studio, I

said I'd like to see some of her paintings, and she blushed and said: "But it's not that kind. I don't paint."

I remembered Bert said writers have studios before they sell anything, and I said: "I'd like to read some of your writings."

Then she nearly got mad, and said I was trying to make fun of her, and I had a hard time convincing her I'm not. Anyway, we would all go down there some night, and then I would understand all about her studio.

But I forgot to tell about Mr. Brewster, if you thought there wasn't one. He is still Estelle's husband, but separated from her by a judge. He has another big house and lives in it, as the judge told him to, or anyway not in the same house with Estelle.

His profession is a clubman, which means you join all the clubs, and hang around the different ones and play polo or watch it. Also, maybe you have a stable, with race horses in it, and he belongs to the Jockey Club, and I knew by that he's a democratic fellow as they say. Also you have a yacht, and enter the different regattas, depending on how long your boat is, and maybe how wide. I don't know for sure.

Estelle said Jimmy, her husband, was a dear, but the only trouble is he's not a one woman man, and was I? Now, if a man's prepared for a question like that he can tell the truth and say, "Yes, of course I am." But if it's asked without knowing it's coming, he's liable to say anything, even if he is one or tries to be.

Now I'm never crazy about but one lady at a time. If I'm not sure whether I still like the old one, maybe I'm not going around blind, but when I'm crazy about the new one I'm not crazy about the old one.

So I just looked at her, and she must of liked my looks. She said: "That's answer enough!" Then I said: "Jimmy is crazy not to like only one woman, if it's you," and that fixed it up. I mean it, too, because I'm crazy about Estelle.

She said Jimmy was so nice about fixing up the separation, and in the summer one of them would go to Paris to fix up the rest of it. I'll explain it.

You can go to Paris and find out what the law in Paris says you've got to say to get a divorce. Then all you've got to do

is say it and get it. Which is about the same in Reno.

If you like a boat ride better than a train ride, you go to Paris, but if you think you'll be seasick you go to Reno. But most people like Paris better anyway, because there's more life there than Reno, and you can have a good time while you're waiting to lose husband or wife.

Maybe you'll meet the next one if you want to try it again. Everybody goes to Paris, divorce or no divorce.

Bert says that if a dog visits a house, and meets another dog and gets his ear chewed, after that he walks on the other side of the street. But people are not like that. They go back to get their second ear chewed, and sometimes the first one all over again.

Anyway, I think the Paris law is all right. The law in this country, except Reno, says if you like a woman once you've got to like her all your life, or else try to make everybody think you do. And even if you hate her like poison, or she hates you like it, you've still got to be happily married.

Anyway, Estelle says she thinks she'll be the one to go to Paris, because she needs some new gowns, but all those she's got look new to me. Nowadays, if a woman wears a dress twice, it's a rag; and if she says it's a rag, it's a rag.

Estelle asked me: "Clem, where did you buy those clothes?"

Before, I would have got mad, but by this time I'm learning. I know if Estelle don't like them, she's right about my clothes, if she's not about hers.

So I said: "I bought them before I had much money," and she wrote a note and told me: "Give it to the man and he'll do the rest."

It's a big store, and I spend about a half day there. I did like Estelle said, make no suggestions; but I thought he would never get through.

It's a dangerous thing to do, let a clothes salesman have his way. They're worse than a barber. No, I'll take it back.

Anyway, I figured a man like that ought to know all about styles and colors and shapes, even if I don't recognize myself in some things. I got hats, and shoes, and day suits, and evening clothes; a riding suit, which I really needed; ties, hosiery for men, under things for men, and everything they had, I guess.

When I asked how much it cost, the salesman smiled and said: "Don't worry about that." So I didn't, but maybe I should; I don't know.

## V

JIMMY BREWSTER called up one day in a big hurry, and asked Estelle if she'll do him a favor. Both his cars are out of fix, and he's delayed getting to the race park, and will she send a car if it's convenient?

"Why, of course, Jimmy, dear," she said, and soon I was at the club he happens to be at that day. He said: "Hello, Clem!" like he knew me. "Estelle was telling me about you."

Jimmy had a nice, easy way about him, and I felt like I'd known him a long time. He sat in the front seat, and asked me to step on it, which I did.

He laughed, and said I'd better watch out or Estelle would vamp me, and he told the one about the guide falling in love with a rich girl and not knowing she's rich. I told the one about the Dumb Dora who was never in love with anybody but herself, but got rich playing with Dumb Bells. He told another, which I can't tell here, but I guess you've heard it.

Then he asked me some questions, and I told him I was from Pittsburgh, and twenty-two, and started working young.

"By the way," he said, "how much money have you with you?"

I told him about thirty dollars. Then he took out his pocketbook and counted off five hundred dollars.

"Put this on Essie"—that's a horse he named for Estelle—"because she's in to win to-day. You can pay me back afterward, but if you lose—forget about it."

For those that don't know much about racing, I'll explain it. Essie is running her first season, and has started several times, but didn't win because Jimmy didn't want her to. But he would have the jockey say just how good she is, and whether she could have won if he'd let her out.

Well, not winning any races, the book-makers have her sized up as not having much chance. When we got to the park, Jimmy asked the odds, and it's ten to one. He showed me how to place my bet.

They ran two or three races, then came our event, and I got over where the horses enter the track, and asked a man which is Essie. He pointed her out, and I saw the colors, and tried to keep my eye on them.

It's the main race, and everybody is excited, including the horses. You could tell they were awful anxious to do their work. And in that way they certainly didn't remind me of garage mechanics.

At first Essie is on the outside, about halfway from the first horse. I can't follow them very well, but at the last turn she passes all but one. They come down the track together, and I can't tell which is ahead.

Then the crowd sends up a roar, and everybody is yelling "Come on, Bandit!" which is the favorite nag they've got their money on. I was wondering if people thought that would help Bandit any, and the next thing I knew I'm waving my arms like everybody else, and yelling: "Come on, Essie!"

My heart was pounding away like a jumpy engine in an old taxi. I guess that didn't help Essie any, but maybe it helped me.

Bert says people, to stay normal, have to do some foolish things. If you see a man acting a little foolish you know he's all right, but if he don't you know he's either crazy or crooked, or maybe both.

Some one jumped up in front of me, and I couldn't see which won, but the shouting quiets down so quick I know the favorite didn't. Then the names go up, and I gave out a big shout, and everybody looked at me with their eyes wide open.

I'm a regular King Solomon to them, only I guess Solomon never saw a horse race. With all the wives he had, he was lucky to get off as far as the handbook at the corner cigar store.

I was in a daze, but got my money—five thousand five hundred dollars. I don't remember if they had any more races or what happened until finally I started to meet Jimmy.

He was over by the clubhouse, and you can't guess who was talking to him—Phil Neal, with Winnie standing off to one side. Then Jimmy met her.

She looked stunning, as they say, and I can tell Jimmy is looking her over, if you'll excuse me for this expression. I can't think up another one to say the same thing with exactly. I was careful to stay where they couldn't see me, and soon Jimmy came along, and we drove back to town.

He didn't want to take back the five hundred dollars, but I made him, with hearty

thanks for the tip. He's in fine spirits both ways, and offered me some of the bottle.

But when Royal and I were up in the mountains we took the pledge to stay on the wagon together a year. I did it to encourage him, and so I declined Jimmy's invitation, which is not so easy since prohibition.

In the old days, offering a man a drink didn't mean much, but now you're doing him a favor. If he happens not to take it, you're very much surprised, and it's almost like being insulted. Maybe he thinks your stuff's not good stuff.

Jimmy didn't like my refusing. You know how they jump from friendly to ugly sometimes, so I had to explain about Royal and me.

"I'll be damned!" he said, but after that he was more friendly than ever, and said some interesting things.

"I'll tell you something," he said. "Royal ought to be glad it was only a habit, because you can change habits, but just think of the things people can't change, such as vanity and selfishness and stubbornness. You not only can't change them, but you're dead sure you haven't got them. The greater a woman's vanity, the more vain women she can point out; the stingier a man is, the more generous he thinks he is, while the hard-headed man is sure he's surrounded by stubborn people."

I never had anybody but Bert talk to me like that before. Jimmy said a lot more, and I'm glad I'm learning things.

Then after awhile he said: "Clem, I gave you a good tip to-day, didn't I?" I said he did, and wondered what was coming next.

"Well, now I'm going to give you even a better one. Will you take it?"

I promised, and then he said: "Don't ever take another tip except from me, and that won't be many because there's no such thing as a sure thing in playing the ponies, but only probabilities once in awhile. I wanted to win to-day, but could have lost. It'll be so any time I give you a tip, so don't expect to win every time, and your limit is five hundred. Promise?"

I promised again, and then he chatted about something else like he had something off his mind. I hope I'm different from most guys, because Bert says the best way on earth to get people to do something is to warn them against it.

But Jimmy didn't say anything about Phil Neal, and I was wondering what kind of business he could have with that crook. Phil looked prosperous, and so did Winnie, and it looked like my idea about them going into the ditch might not be so good.

But I thought it all over and, as that's my lucky day, I decided to lay low and bet on Winnie. I mean, to make Phil miserable and wish he'd never seen her.

Jimmy gave me three more tips, and I won twice and lost once. The odds were not as good, but I did pretty well, and I hope you think it's all right. Bert says some think it's sinful to bet on the ponies, but O. K. to swap horses, take chances on the weather, gamble with a wedding ring, and play long shots like Dr. Fake's Kidney Capsules.

## VI

I GUESS when you started to read this you didn't expect to see me going to school, and I didn't either. But even before I drove Jimmy to the races I became an English student, but don't use a book.

Just because you learned a few words when you were a baby is no reason why you shouldn't learn a few more when you're a man. Some people don't think so; their voice might change, but they still talk baby talk.

I hope you've already noticed some improvement. But I'll tell anybody it takes time to learn it. Words are harder to handle than a tight clutch in a traffic jam.

It happened like this: There's a private school for society girls down the street from us, which Estelle went to before she made her debut. It's owned by a Miss Young, who is not like her name, but at least forty.

Well, sometimes Miss Young would drop around to see Estelle, and one day I drove them to a meeting on Forty-Third Street about birth control. I don't know whether you know all about it or not, but I was wondering what Miss Young was doing at it. I guess it's like nearly everything else, the people who ought to go don't, like a woman that's got sixteen kids.

Anyway, Miss Young noticed me, and she and Estelle had some talk. To make it short, she said she would teach me English after school hours. So I started going twice a week if I'm not wanted with the car, and if I am Estelle phones for me, which is convenient for everybody.

Miss Young is not beautiful. She's kind of tall and thin and bent over a little, and a razor wouldn't hurt the looks of her upper lip. But she's nice to me, and I like her.

She said we wouldn't pay much attention to rules, but would just talk. She puts down my mistakes and makes me say it right until it's automatic, which means without thinking, like when I'm driving and you're eating.

We get along fine, and one day I mentioned my biography, and she asked me to show her a part. She read a little and looked up at me quick, and I could tell she liked it.

Then she said: "It's very good, indeed, and you must keep right on. It's good practice. But you must not let your lessons prevent you from writing it naturally, and as you learn to speak more correctly you will change your style accordingly."

She said it was good for somebody to write who had quit school so young, but I might leave off a few which's, which I'll learn about in time.

The only trouble is, Miss Young sometimes does most of the talking, and I think more about how she's saying it than what she's saying. When I told Estelle that, she laughed and said I would do.

That's a queer expression. Estelle meant I'm all right, or something like that.

It's the same way with the word "belong." You either belong or you don't belong, which means you're a member of one of the best families.

Of course you mustn't do anything raw, even if you do belong. I mean, you must not be sent to the penitentiary, because if you do your name comes out of the social register.

The register is a book they have showing the names of everybody who belongs. It's not like a hotel register, where you sign your own name. You don't even tell them to put your name in it. But if you belong and they leave it out, you have got a right to get mad as hell. Who decides who belong, so they'll know who to put in, I don't know yet.

Anyway, before society got a good start in New York one man was a farmer, another ran a store, a third a ferryboat, and so on. They made money and saved it and bought farms, which later became real estate.

Their sons and daughters began to be noticed, but they didn't belong until they



got old and had more. But the grandsons and granddaughters were all in society, born that way, and if you're born that way it's hard to get out.

Nowadays you can get in society other ways, like being the President's wife or playing polo. But you maybe haven't got as blue blood as if your ancestor was a farmer on Forty-Second Street.

Estelle said Miss Young isn't in society, but highly respected on account of conducting a high class school and associating with young ladies soon to be in it. Her girls, in a way, aren't really in it until they enter it, which is when they come out.

They have to make their *début*. This means they are introduced to all the people they know already.

All this was explained to me mostly by Miss Young, because Estelle is registered, and if you are registered you have position, and if you have position you don't explain to people how you got it. It isn't done—which don't mean it's wrong to do it, but it's not right to do it. Hell, that don't sound right, but let it go.

You can marry into society sometimes, and sometimes you can marry out of it, which women don't do often. With most women their position is a lot more important than their husband, and if she's got to give up her position or give up the man, well, he's no better than a hundred to one shot.

The young men in society don't come out or make their *début*, which costs a lot of money. They go to Harvard or Princeton or Yale, and spend their money that way, spreading it out over four years.

You wouldn't think the society girls I see coming out of Miss Young's school are in or going to be. Before I knew all about it, if you stood one up beside any stenographer on the subway and ask me to pick the candidate, I would have picked the stenographer every time.

You see, society girls have a lot of money, but can afford to look like they haven't, while the stenographer hasn't any, but can't afford to look like she hasn't. She's got to look her best, according to her idea of what her best is. Most office girls seem to think they look their best all dressed up for a ballroom scene like a movie queen. Only they forget you only see the star close up two or three times an hour, while you've got to see them all day long—and in the evening, too, if your

wife's away. Bert says he pays his stenographer, Miss Hale, more money for caring for her complexion and her marcel than for his correspondence and file index.

Of course I don't see much of Miss Young's students, but from the way they look and act I believe every bit of the best family dope, and wish I knew one. And I did nearly meet her one day in Miss Young's study, but I'll tell about it later.

Before that, Ruby invited me to her studio party, which was interesting, and I nearly got into trouble. I mean, with a capital T.

## VII

RUBY doesn't give many parties. I knew it wouldn't be such a wild party, but a lot of people think any party in the Village has to be awful wicked.

Maybe it was that way once, but anybody that's been a taxi driver in New York since you can't drink over a public bar knows you can now be as wild in one part as another, and maybe wilder. It depends on just how dishonest is your bootlegger, if you don't buy it at the drug store.

Estelle was going, but when the time came wasn't feeling well, so I went by myself. She said she supposed she could stand it, not going; but I would like it, and if anybody asked me my business, to say I'm a capitalist.

"You have some money invested down town," she said, "and some day you will be one."

Then she said she hoped there wouldn't be too many intellectuals there, but didn't explain her remark. I promised to arrive early, at least by 11 P.M., to help Ruby.

I whistled at a taxi beating it through to Fifth Avenue, and when it pulled up I saw my eye was good. It was my old cab, and Dutch was driving, but he didn't recognize me until I asked him: "Who said you could drive a car?"

"Hello, there, big boy!" he said. "I thought it was the Prince of Wales."

We stopped at Twenty-Seventh Street to have some hot dogs and coffee, because I'm hungry, and don't want to take any chances on Ruby's kitchenette. A place that's good for cocktails can't be good for food, and she's always hungry when she comes home, unless she has already taken the edge off at some swell hotel.

Dutch told me the news, and said he guessed I'd never have to come back to

that dog's life. He hoped not, anyway. He's the one showed me the tricks of driving a cab in New York, and if it wasn't for him I wouldn't have lasted two days.

The boys used to say Dutch drove the first cab, and would be the last to hear St. Peter's traffic whistle. Anyway, I was glad to see him, and he was, too.

I bought some flowers, and soon was at Ruby's. Her studio has one big room, with windows to the ceiling on one side, and house rooms on the other sides. It's homelike, with a big fireplace, and tall candles for lights in the studio room.

She liked the flowers, and took me to the kitchenette, and I met Mrs. Thomas.

"Call me Fannie," Mrs. Thomas said.

She was trying to squeeze oranges, although she's already squeezed too many. I can see Ruby is annoyed, and later she told me she didn't know Fannie very well. They were once on a benefit committee, and Fannie is still an active member, and just happened to drop in.

Fannie liked me better than I liked her. It was one of those loving jags; you've seen it. The upper half of her is heavy weight, and the lower half is light weight.

She carried a load of jewelry, how good I don't know. She breaks three phonograph records putting on one, and wants to dance, but Ruby sent me out to the delicatessen store for more oranges, and some Roquefort that she forgot.

Which latter I had to take right back, because it's not imported, and I must have him cut it off the big chunk next to the dill pickles. She didn't know that the man wanted to give me that kind in the first place, but I had insisted on the tin foil kind, because the big chunk didn't look just right in spots. Now I like the spots better than the cheese.

While I was out I was wondering what Fannie would do to the party, and I remembered Dr. Kirby's prescription, but Ruby was not so sure about it like I was. But we needn't have worried, because while we're talking in the studio room, Fannie is doing her own prescribing in the kitchenette.

The first thing we know, we hear a thump. We ran in, thinking she was hurt, but she's only sitting on the floor. We put her in one of the rooms and covered her up and threw open the windows.

We were just in time, because about then the guests started coming, and soon there's

plenty of smoke and empty glasses, and laughing and talking. A Mrs. Bates helps Ruby, and over in the corner a Miss Hoyt—she's the prettiest—is playing and talking to some men; and her playing is very soft and nice. Some are on the long soft seat in front of the fireplace, and two or three are standing in the middle and beginning to get up an argument.

It's all very natural, informal as they say, and I'm trying to spot what Estelle said about intellectuals, while a Miss Pettigrew is talking to me. She keeps saying: "Don't you just love it?" stringing out "love" longer and longer, and I kept saying: "I sure do!" but wondering what.

And finally she said she's going to have a studio just like this. I'm glad I know now what I'm "sure doing." And her saying "don't" so often reminded me that Miss Young said I must learn where to say "doesn't."

Just then some more people came in, and one, I'm sure, is an intellectual. He wears nose glasses tied to him somewhere, and doesn't shave all his face, like stage butlers don't.

It doesn't take both eyes to see he's pretty sure of himself, and he lights his cigarette like it's a special function and we should watch him do it. Then he holds the match in one hand and flips it into the fireplace in a playful way with the other middle finger like we used to do with spit balls. That ends the ceremony, and means he's in a light mood, as they say, and won't talk deep to-night.

Mr. Britewell, that's his name, takes two or three cocktails, and jokes about catching up, but I know it's pretty serious business, because he's like a lot of people, suspicious of the supply. Then he began telling about the play he just criticized for his newspaper, using the standard criticism, but changing the names.

He did it for the regular critic who is sick, but of course he did his own column in the afternoon, and one or two little things might interest us. I read his column several times, and some I could understand and some I couldn't, but I got the general idea—first find out what everybody thinks about something, and then explaining how wrong everybody is.

It's all written light and easy, like he talks at Ruby's, and the only trouble is he's still trying to catch up on the cocktails. The more he tries, the lighter he

talks, until after awhile it's so light it doesn't mean anything. Then Ruby rushed in the sandwiches and black coffee.

There's a professor of psychology there, Professor Lane, and he tries us out on some tests, just speaking them off. Everybody is surprised, and of course I am, when I say the answers first nearly every time.

And the professor said: "And are you an artist, Mr. Cooley?" and I said: "No, sir; I'm a capitalist."

Everybody looked at me quick, and the prof. spilled his coffee. It's quiet for a little while, and then Mr. Bloke, who is an editor of something, said: "And may I inquire if your social and economical theories are in full accord with your capitalistic practices?"

Well, of course that's the worst mind test yet. I did some awful hard thinking, but I know I can't get the answer quick enough, if ever, so to stall for time, I said: "And why not?"

That got them started; first Mr. Bloke, and soon everybody is in it, and I'm listening. And about all I make out of it is that capital's all right if it's yours, but all wrong if it's mine.

About the system part, I think it's Mr. Bloke's idea everything should belong to everybody, and everybody should run everything, but all worked out on some nice plan so everybody's happy. I can see how a lot of people fall for it, because nearly everybody thinks he could run something if he had a chance to.

They talk on, and then I remembered what I said in my biography about why men work so hard and try to make money. I thought it was time now for me to say something.

So I said: "Mr. Bloke, maybe your scheme will work all right so far as dividing up the work and the money and the honors. But that's not what men are after; they want to get the woman they love or keep the woman they've got. Now, even if you can divide the honors and even up the money, you sure can't even up the women. They're all different, and always will be. And women being different makes a man love a certain one, and the big desire he has for her is something you can't regulate. And unless you can regulate it, men are going to be jealous and fight one another like hell."

That was the longest speech I ever made, and the farther along I got the more seri-

ous I grew. I never felt exactly like that before, unless maybe when I'm crazy about somebody and want her to believe it.

Anyway, they all liked it, and Mr. Bloke scratched his head, and Mr. Britewell, who is all right now after the black coffee, grabbed my hand and said: "It 'll make a bully column." Maybe you've noticed it; the man who's always saying this is bully and that's bully, thinks he's bully.

Professor Lane and I talked a little, and he wanted to be sure to see me again, and I thanked him. Miss Hoyt, the real pretty one, said she's in the building, meaning where Ruby is; and she'll be real angry with me if I don't come to see her any time.

### VIII

BEFORE starting home I was helping Ruby straighten up things and talking about the party when out walked Fannie. She's on her feet, but that's about all, and she looks like she's been playing football.

She makes a bee line for the bottle, and pretty soon announces she's got to go home. She's got the finest and smartest little boy in the world, and never fails to see him off to school. She invites me to take her home; it's only to Mount Vernon. I thought "My God!" and nearly said it.

Ruby tried hard to get her to stay, but by that time it's one of those determined jags; you've seen it. So I was in for it, twenty miles each way, and starting at 3 A.M.

Well, I call a cab and get her in. At first she's kind of loving, or tries it, but I keep on telling about the party, just saying anything, and pretty soon she's asleep on my shoulder, which, of course, it thrills me to death.

It's ten times longer riding the distance, that way at least, than driving it, which I did many a time; but finally we came into Mount Vernon. I told the driver to keep going, and soon I'll tell him the address, but didn't because I couldn't wake Fannie up to find out.

She nearly comes to, and then she's dead again, and that keeps up for fifteen long minutes. Then I told the driver to stop, and I sat there wondering what to do about it. In her case a telephone directory wouldn't be any good.

It looked like I would have to take her back to Ruby's. This didn't seem such a bad idea, considering it's not such a good

job delivering a married woman home to a strange husband at four o'clock in the morning.

But I decided to try again, and take my chances with the husband, and I was shaking her and pleading with her when a big cop stuck his head in the window. He took one good look, acted bored, and said: "Two blocks to the right, one to the left, second house on the right," and took his head out and walked away, swinging his stick.

We drove to the house, and I lifted her out and carried her up the walk and onto the steps, getting weaker every second, but not on account of Fannie. I rang the bell and waited, and my heart was acting worse than when Essie won at the races. That time I stood a chance to win a lot and lose nothing, this time I stood a chance to lose all and win nothing.

I don't know how long I waited, but the next thing I knew I'm looking right at a big police dog from Belgium, which I wished he was there yet across the ocean. I was so interested in him that I don't see what's behind him—a tall man in a bathrobe and white whiskers, with both hands in his pockets. I decided to act quick.

"Here's your wife," I said, and put her down and started.

I don't mind saying I wanted to run, but I didn't. I just walked back to the taxi; it's the best I could do. I can feel one bullet tearing through a lung and another through my stomach, mostly my stomach.

They made me feel awful sick—Miss Young would say "quite, quite weak"—but I made the cab without any damage. Of course now, when I've got time to reason about it, it seems foolish to feel like I felt. That couldn't have been the first time Fannie came home unconscious.

Next morning, or it's the same one, was my time off when I take boxing lessons. I've been doing this since Royal taught me a little, and he said to go to McCarthy's gymnasium.

Some people think it's high class to hit what you're aiming at with a golf club, but it's low class to aim with your fist. Maybe it's because you dress up for one and undress for the other, or maybe it's because you can make money out of boxing and have to have it already for golf.

But Bert says it's because in golf you

can't knock a ball out, while in boxing you can knock a man out. The same people who make you a hero if you're in a war and put a lot of men out forever, turn their noses up if you're in a ring and put one man out for ten seconds.

Anyway, I like it, and that morning I was a little sluggish at first, but after that quicker than if I'd slept all night. It's a queer thing that the day after you sleep hardly any you're wide awake, but the day after that, when you've slept ten hours, you're a dope.

Briscoe, he's my instructor, and I start mixing it up, and he said: "In the next round give me all you've got," which I did. Then he does, as though he's teaching me not to try and get rough with him.

He gave me several good ones which hurt, and then comes in again, but too careless, and I caught him with a left hook right on the button, which is the point of the jaw. Maybe I should of pulled it, but he wasn't pulling his blows.

Anyway, he's out for ten minutes, and by that time there's a big crowd of trainers and boxers there. A heavy set man pushed in and looked at Briscoe, who's just getting up, and then at me. He's got his hat pulled over one eye, and he's chewing a big fat cigar like you've seen the rough-neck villain in the movies.

"Who are you?" he said.

"I'm a student," I said. "Who are you?"

He looked kind of funny, then smiled and said: "I'm McCarthy. How long you been boxing?"

I told him several months. He had a little talk with Briscoe, and was called away, but came back with some visitors, and one is Jimmy Brewster.

"Look who's here," Jimmy said, and shook hands. "Training to be a professional?"

"I'm sure not," I said, and then he was called away. Briscoe was all right by that time, and we had two more rounds, but not so fast, while he gave me some pointers about left hooks. He said he didn't know I had it, and it was great.

McCarthy and the visitors watched the second round. The latter are from one of Jimmy's clubs and planning an exclusive benefit with two or three bouts. They came to make arrangements.

Jimmy asked if I'd like to be on the program, but somehow I didn't like it. I



don't know why. But all insisted, and he said he'll fix the getting off part.

He'll borrow me again, and Estelle don't have to know anything, which she'd better not because she's taken a liking to me, he said. She'll think I'll be killed sure; she's funny that way.

Well, they all seemed so anxious, and Jimmy had been so nice to me, I said I would. It was to come off in about a week, and McCarthy and Briscoe said they'll help pick my opponent and have an even match. Everybody was mighty friendly.

I guess Bert is right. He says don't expect to be judged by your everyday doings, but by what you do in your off moments. If you get drunk once, you're a drunkard all your life. Let them think you're funny once, and then try to cry. Look across the area once when the old maid left her curtain up, and try to live that down.

## IX

Just as I was getting in the car in front of the gymnasium, Jimmy came out and said he was going uptown, and if I have time I can take him and we can get everything straight about the benefit. The address he gave me to take him is the same apartment house as Winnie's.

During our talk I did some thinking, so about a block from Winnie's I had engine trouble. Jimmy said he couldn't wait, and as soon as he was gone I beat it—which is slangy, and Miss Young is trying hard to break me from it.

But slang comes natural, I guess, because it's easy to say, or maybe it's more forceful, like swear words, and I guess Miss Young will never break me from them on account of not knowing what mine are. You can't swear before a lady that's nearly in society.

Anyway, Miss Young is a nice teacher, and she gave me a dictionary, and I've looked up nearly every word in this biography, I think—and I find it ought to be "autobiography." And I've learned that words are like people, some belong and some don't, and if a word belongs it goes in the word register, but if it doesn't belong it's slang.

But if people keep on using an outside word a long time, then it's accepted and makes its debut in the dictionary. Sometimes, like playing polo or being the President's wife gets you in society quick, a word jumps right into the register, say

when it's used by some great writer like Will Rogers or Bernard Shaw.

Bert says he knows when a word's wrong even if he couldn't spell it, but Miss Hale, his stenographer, thinks the dictionary's for the same purpose as her—an ornament.

The one Miss Young gave me says on it "unabridged." Well, I gazed at that word for weeks without thinking much about it before it occurred to me it might mean something. Then I found out.

I guess there are hundreds of things we're gazing at all the time and don't even think about what they mean. But in boxing you've got to watch every little move and expression close, and know what it means, or you'll get your head knocked off.

Well, in my lesson I was telling Miss Young about things like this, and there was a young society lady in the study looking through some book. Her back was to us, and she was so quiet I forgot anybody was there until she said: "Pardon me, Miss Young. I found it; and thank you so much."

Then she glanced toward me just a second and dropped her eyes, and said: "I beg your pardon," and left.

Her voice was very soft, but clear, too, like the chimes you hear in the church on Twenty-Ninth Street about sundown. Brown eyes she has, soft like her voice, and long dark lashes.

She's young and little, but she walks so very easy it makes you think of a beautiful new roadster moving along slow and quiet, but you know what it can do on a hill.

She's not like any girl I've ever seen. She's shy, but somehow you know she's got courage and would be brave if there's need to be.

She's beautiful, but you don't think so much about why she is; it just shines out and fills the room. She's like some one you would just be happy to be near, and maybe touch her dress, or after awhile her hand.

When she left it was like the room was very empty, and there's just Miss Young sitting there, and me, and the desk, and some chairs, and books. I saw Miss Young's lips moving, but had to listen different to hear her voice. What she's saying seems strange and not important any more, but then the lesson's over, and I'm glad to get out in the street.

Walking along, the sound of everything is different, too. I didn't know before you could hear the rattle of the Third Avenue

L trains from Park Avenue, and the school kids are noisy, and some whistle is so shrill my ears hurt.

Then, before I know it, I'm stepping off the elevator in the big house, and Estelle was just going down.

"Since when have you assumed all the burdens of the world?" she said.

I guess it's the first time she saw me not cheerful, but I didn't know I was so serious.

"I was just thinking," I said, but if she'd asked me what it was about I wouldn't have known.

"I'm starting for a walk," she said. "Come along. Let's walk through the park or go window shopping. Which do you prefer?"

"I prefer the latter," I said, and she laughed and was pleased.

I explained that I just learned it, and then I said: "The former does not appeal to me so strongly."

And suddenly I got mad at myself, and just lost my head.

"Yes," I said, "that's what Miss Young said to-day, word for word, and here I am twenty-two, and I can't talk any better than those school kids back there. If I say something half right, it's because I've memorized the words and not because I know a damn thing about it."

Estelle didn't know what to say for a minute. Then she said: "Now, Clem, don't think or talk like that. You're just having a low spell, and, forgive me, but you're on the verge of pitying yourself, and self-pity is the worst indoor sport there is. The truth is you've done wonderfully. Miss Young is pleased, and says some day she'll be proud of you."

Then after a little Estelle went on quietly: "I think I know what has happened"—and she looked at me straight, but very kindly—"and I believe you are through with being crazy about old married women. This must be the real thing, and I'm glad. You may not know who you are, but Claudine and I believe you are somebody, and that some day you'll find it to be true. But regardless of that, you can be somebody on your own account if you will only keep your head up and smile, and keep on going to Miss Young's. That's enough right now. Come on, let's have a good time window shopping!"

We started down Fifth Avenue, Estelle talking about things we saw, but I couldn't

say much. I was thinking about a lot of things, and most of them don't make me feel happy.

Before we got to Forty-Second Street, Estelle saw something she liked, and asked me to wait a few minutes. Then I decided to do something right away, and almost ran to the store where I bought my clothes.

I found the man who waited on me, and explained what I came for. He reported that the bill wasn't paid yet, and they took my check and will send a receipt when they know it's all right.

Estelle was waiting, but only a minute or so, and we walked on. But I was still too quiet, so she stopped a taxi and said: "Get in. We're going to Ruby's. This is what her studio is good for."

Ruby was surprised, but pleased, and there's quite a crowd there having a good time talking and dancing and breaking the prohibition law, of course. Anyway, we've got more nice lawbreakers in this country than they've got in any other country, which is quite a distinction.

And I met a very great man who makes speeches in Washington and knows more reasons why prohibition is a good thing than maybe Mr. Volstead and Mr. Wheeler. When I saw him at Ruby's I could see where he gets his information and inspiration, but of course I don't know anything about where the other gentlemen get theirs.

I guess Bert is right. There's a lot of things you can't know for sure until you've found them out for yourself. But most people, he says, prefer secondhand evidence, which is a good thing for him, because if it wasn't for hearsay lawyers would starve to death.

Miss Hoyt was at Ruby's, and made me slip away to see her studio. She has a lot of pictures painted by her artist friends, books written by her writer friends, music thought up by her composer friends, and statues sculpted by her sculptor friends, so her studio is quite complete.

She played something very beautiful, and then something more, and by that time it's getting late, and I sit there in the dim light enjoying it, even if it makes me feel kind of sad, but I can't tell why I feel that way.

Bert says it's human for us to enjoy sadness sometimes, and maybe the world wouldn't be worth living in if people didn't have troubles to occupy them, and for that reason he doubts if he'll ever get used to

heaven, provided he makes the grade. And as for the women, he says it 'll be like the opposite place if St. Peter doesn't let in a few on a special pass for them to nag throughout all eternity.

Well, after awhile Miss Hoyt stops and comes over and sits down by me and says I'm a dear boy, and plays with my hair. I guess it's up to me to start something, but I don't feel that way, so I just hold her hand a little.

I don't see why women like that don't get married, but at that a lot don't seem any different after they do. I guess they married position or money, and not a man.

Bert says that if a woman doesn't marry a husband, she's just got to marry something, and it's usually a cause. A cause is an idea which nobody but a few people believe in, but they believe in it so strong that they think the world will go to hell if they don't convert everybody to it. He says that as long as there are old maids and unhappy married women, there'll be causes.

Anyway, while Miss Hoyt is holding my hand, and I'm holding back, or trying to, the door flies open, and the whole crowd from Ruby's comes pouring in. They are all feeling good, and some kid us a little, but pretty soon they're all dancing while Estelle and I help Miss Hoyt fix some more Wheeler whizzes, which they all have about two rounds of.

## X

WHILE they're having a good time in Miss Hoyt's studio, somebody gets a bright idea to drive down to North Shore Inn, a road house on Long Island. It's owned by a big politician, Estelle said, and you don't have to use demi-tasse cups, but can see what you're drinking. Miss Hoyt said: "Drinking it that way makes me feel as if I'm breaking the law!"

The big politician, Mr. Duffy, was there, but he's so modest you wouldn't know he owns it. He came over to speak to Estelle, and I met him.

We talked a little while Estelle was dancing, and he invited me to visit the club in my district. He wrote a gentleman's name on his card and added "Introducing a young friend."

Well, I didn't know much about a politician, but I've learned some. He is a man that runs an office without running for it.

It's like this: I'm a politician, and know all the voters, and you want an office. I

ask all the voters to vote for you, and you promise to do what they want you to do; you're their representative.

But I know better than you what they want you to do. So you ask me what to do, and I tell you, and you do it. You're glad, and they're pleased, and I—well, I didn't learn that part yet.

They can't all own a road house like Mr. Duffy, and not get arrested for selling hootch. You see, if you're the sheriff or chief of police, and I'm Mr. Duffy, a big politician, I tell you the voters don't want you to arrest me, and you don't.

Well, we stayed awhile, and everybody's having something but me, on account of Royal and me taking the pledge, and all the time I'm trying to be cheerful like Estelle wants me to. Then somebody else gets a bright idea to go back to town to Oklahoma Kate's, which is a very exclusive night club as to getting in, but not as to who's getting in.

I mean, you don't have to be in society to get in, but you might be. About all you've got to be is a big boxer or big actor or big banker or something.

The idea of an exclusive night club is they make you feel it's a special privilege to throw away your money, and you'll be offended if they don't give you the chance. Anyway, if a man's got more money than he can spend sensibly, somebody ought to help him spend it foolishly, otherwise his son will do it without his help.

Bert says that after a rich man dies and has to watch his heir's performance below, surely the good Lord will let him swear and storm and raise hell in heaven.

At Oklahoma Kate's they've got good stuff, if high-priced, and a good song and dance entertainment, if not dressed quite enough. Of course Kate is not a big politician, but she is sitting pretty, which is some more slang; and I can't give you the low down how she does it.

We got home very early in the morning, and a night like that doesn't help me any to get in shape for Young Karpy, who is to fight me at the benefit. And when I heard about him, I'm quite, quite sorry I didn't pull that left hook which Briscoe got.

You see, Karpy was the boxer who made Briscoe decide to be an instructor, and maybe Briscoe wants me to decide that I'm a good chauffeur. I can see it's a case of bad judgment, somewhere.

Besides that, I was wishing more and more I hadn't promised to box. I don't mind driving for people in society, especially when they're nice like Estelle, but entertaining them looks like you're not as good as they are. Position is all right, but I don't think it's got to be made such a fuss over.

I'm glad of one thing, though; we don't have to play any trick on Estelle, because she decides to spend a few days in Atlantic City. My time's my own, except driving her down and going after her.

Before that, I thought people only went to Atlantic City in the summer time to swim, but I find out a lot of people go there any time to ride in rolling chairs. The board walk was full of people who are there for their health, Estelle said. If giving a chair pusher plenty of exercise helps people's health, they ought to come away cured, leaving, maybe, a sick pusher.

Coming back through Philadelphia, I got called down for not observing a traffic sign. They've got more signs there than in New York, and more in Trenton than in Philadelphia, and it looks as if as the towns decrease, the signs increase, and the less the traffic the more the regulations.

I guess the reason is because New York's traffic is a serious proposition, and they've figured out how to make it move quickest and easiest. But in towns like Philadelphia and Trenton, they can play with it, and make it look as if every street crossing is Forty-Second Street and Fifth Avenue. They think up some fine puzzles, and if it's their idea to hinder traffic, they're pretty good.

Driving through the different towns, I saw the girls were very friendly, and waved their hands. I was friendly, and waved back, and finally two right near the car waved, but when I didn't stop, I learned that I'm a big bum for not picking them up.

I said: "I'd rather be one big bum than two little ones," which maybe I shouldn't have said. Before I got away they said some more things. I had always thought a night cab driver in New York would hear all the different ways to express different ideas, but these small town girls surprised me.

Bert says this idea about New York being so wicked, and the country towns so good, is all bunk, but it's a mistake to tell people different. They have believed it so

long, and like to talk about it so much, it would be a shame to tell them the truth.

It's become a favorite belief and a very pleasant topic of conversation, and the people at the crossroads resent being robbed of things like that. Something big would be missing from their lives; the good brothers and sisters love to contemplate the ways of the wicked in far places.

Well, with Estelle away, I was able to put in two or three days training for the fight, and the day before it I met Young Karpy in the gymnasium office.

"I understand you're not a professional," he said, "so this fight can't mean much to you. I am, and want to make the best showing I can. I'm willing to lose a little something if I knock you out in about the third. I'll do it anyway, but thought you wouldn't want to be disfigured. How much will it take?"

For a minute I didn't quite get it, then I said: "Maybe you'll put me away, as you say, but you can't pay me enough to lay down, if that's what you mean. I'm being paid to do my best, and that's what I'll do."

Then he got mad and said I was a damned fool, and I'd be lucky if my pretty face didn't kiss the canvas in the first round. Then I got mad and said I'd bet him five hundred his ugly mug would kiss it first, and he took me up. McCarthy held the stakes.

I guess it's a good idea, when you get behind on your quota of foolish acts, to get mad and catch right up. Making a grudge fight and a sucker gamble out of a benefit bout was my contribution.

## XI

BRISCOE did his best with me, and I improved some, but he said maybe not enough to lick Young Karpy. I would be lucky to last the six rounds.

Also, he told me about eating. You may not like boxers, but they don't like your foolish way of eating. It looks as if the most ignorant people sometimes know the most important things.

The last day I only walked around for exercise. But I didn't miss going to Miss Young's.

I got there early, but didn't see her—I mean, the young lady I wrote about. I was thinking about her every minute, and know I'm a fool to, but can't help it.

I was doing the wrong thing even to



think about her, and knowing a thing like that is hell. But somehow it's the kind of hell you would rather be in than not think about her.

I couldn't even meet her, let alone anything else, because I didn't belong, and never would. Besides, I'm ignorant, and only know how to drive a car, which is no more a profession than cleaning a street. And as for letting a woman make a fuss over you, maybe that's all right for a man who wants an easy life, but I've got my opinions of him.

I didn't even know her name, and once I thought I'd ask Miss Young, but what good would it do? She would be just the same, and I'm just the same, and there's no Cooley in the register.

While taking my last walk in the park before the fight, I met Professor Lane, who was at Ruby's party. He was glad to see me, and wants me to call, sure. He's working out some new mind tests, and wants to try them on me or me on them.

I reached the club early to get final instructions and take my things. The fight is set for about 10.30 P.M. I was killing time in the lobby when I saw a program on the bulletin board. Down near the end of the list of events it said:

BOUT—LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT—6 ROUNDS

YOUNG KARPY

vs.

?????

(The Adonis of the Ring)

Of course I was glad they kept their promise about not using my name, but I wondered what Adonis meant. So I walked to Forty-Second Street, to the library, to find out, and did.

I didn't like it a damn bit. I hate to amuse all those people who belong, and I wished the fellow who thought it up was there so I could smash him.

The more I thought about it, the madder I got, and looked all around for Jimmy. I knew he wasn't the one, but he could find out.

But almost at once some one was helping me to get ready for the ring. Briscoe would be in my corner.

"Are you scared?" he was saying.

"Hell, no," I said. "Watch me."

I guess I had more false courage from getting so mad than if I'd had a quart of whisky.

He kept warning me to keep my head, and go slow and wear him down, because if I mixed it too soon, Karpv would get me sure. I began to listen and calm down, and soon we were in the hall, which was crowded.

"Here comes Adonis!" some one said, and then others said it and laughed. Then all that Briscoe could say didn't mean a single thing.

But something else did, because about three rows back from the ring was Jimmy, and that girl from Miss Young's school was sitting beside him.

Our eyes met. Her hand came to her mouth, she was so surprised.

Jimmy waved, and I caught her eye again. If she had stood up and shouted: "Don't let him hurt you!" she couldn't have said it plainer.

Then I was calmer than ever before in all my life, but still mad, too. I mean, I was going to show those society people I didn't have to have a flat nose to make him miss, or cauliflower ears to make me not miss.

I could hear them betting, for charity, I think, and it was all the way from three to one to five to one, and I guess you know who the one was for. Then just before the bell some one handed me a note from Jimmy. It said he had just bet a thousand on me "to show you what I think you can do."

I'm not writing a moving picture, so I can't tell you that the hero got knocked down and nearly out about a dozen times, but somehow managed to keep going, and, just before the final bell, knocked the villain cold.

Karpv was too sure at first, which made us about even, and the two opening rounds were about even. In the third he was more careful, and had me groggy. Some one yelled to him to finish the pretty boy.

Near the end of the fourth he seemed to let up a little, and something told me he didn't train much for this fight. In the fifth it began to come my way, and I get some advice from ringsiders about how to finish him.

The sixth was hot. Karpv sees the decision slipping, which is important to him, and loses his head and comes in the way Briscoe did.

A strange thing happened. As I start the blow I see her face, maybe for a tenth of a second, but that was time enough to

read her expression. It said, don't be brutal.

I pulled my punch, but too late. Karpy went down, not as long as Briscoe did, but enough to be counted out.

I felt sorry, which shows I couldn't be a professional and keep knocking a man down again as fast as he gets up. But it's too late now, and all I can do is help Karpy to his corner, and tell him to forget about our bet, and then I started for the dressing room.

Before I got out I met Jimmy, and she was with him. He congratulated me, and said: "This is my little sister, Carol," which is not an introduction, but an explanation. So I just nodded. She nodded a little, too, and seemed afraid of me. I thought she was thinking: "You big brute!" but not quite as bad as that, either.

"This is yours," Jimmy said. "You won it." He handed me the check he won. "And here's the other," he added, which was for my fee.

I looked at the checks, and she was standing there seeing me take money for knocking a man out. Then I bowed and handed them to her, and said: "Won't you please add these to the benefit fund?" Jimmy started protesting hard, but just then Young Karpy butted right in.

"Briscoe swears you pulled that last one," he said. "Did you?"

"A little, maybe," I said.

And she looked up at me kind of startled, and I guess my eyes must have told her why I pulled it. She surely knew I had seen her expression. It's strange how people can tell each other things and not say a word.

Karpy grabbed my hand. He's kind of rough, but means all right.

"I apologize for what I said the other day," he said; "you're white, and if I can ever do anything for you, just holler."

Then, before Jimmy could say any more, I said good night, looking at her once more, and left. I know she understood my look, but hers I can't figure it out at all.

## XII

WALKING home from the fight, I thought about all that had happened, and about her. What a strange thing she should be Jimmy's sister, Miss Carol Brewster! But I guess she never came to the house, because Estelle is separated from Jimmy.

Miss Brewster didn't want me to get

hurt, because she had seen me before, and not Karpy, and Miss Young was teaching me. But she would abhor me now because I boxed and entertained people in society.

Jimmy wouldn't introduce me, because I didn't belong, and am far below her. Which I am, but not below anybody else, not even Jimmy, who is playing around with a maid, Winnie, and is mixed up with a crook like Phil Neal. But he's all right otherwise.

Anyway, nowadays nearly everybody's mixed up with crooks, if you call bootleggers that, although I don't think most of them are any more than their customers.

Bert says that what this country needs is more bootleggers, because, like the old bartenders, they don't drink, and if we only had a few more, half the country would be teetotalers and obeying the law.

And, talking about Bert, who should I run into but him? I thought he was coming from Estelle's house, but I couldn't be sure, and I guess he wasn't. He said "Hello!" and made some remark about my bag.

So I told him about the fight, which I hadn't mentioned to him before I knew the result. He congratulated me, and then said good night, with a pat on the back like he always gives me.

Upstairs I met Estelle's doctor, coming out of her room. He said: "She fainted at the fight, but go in and be quiet."

I did, and she's there, and not at Atlantic City, and looks very pale, sitting up in the bed. Lily, her maid, motions me to a seat, but Estelle opens her eyes.

"Come here, Clem," she said, very quietly.

I walk to the bed, and she takes my hands.

"Why did you do it?" I know she means the fight, and I can't say anything except I'm sorry. Lily comes and tries to make her lie down.

"No," Estelle said. "I'm all right now. Sit here, Clem."

I sit on the side of the bed.

"I've been a very unhappy woman, Clem," she said, still holding my hands, "but you reminded me of some one I loved, and I'm very fond of you. I got there just as the referee was counting him out, and I thought it was you lying there."

She put her handkerchief to her face, and I felt very miserable.

Just then the door opened, and Jimmy rushed in, all excited, but trying not to be. He stopped when he saw Estelle in bed and me sitting there.

"Are you sick, Essie?" he said.

"No, Jimmy, I'm all right now. But why did you play that trick on me and let this boy get in that fight?"

"So that's it—upset over him!" He sneered as he said it. "Now I know that maid, Olive, told me the truth. She said to-night that this chauffeur is occupying my old quarters here, and that the servants and others are saying all sorts of things. And look at this!"

He hands her the bill for my clothes, which they've sent him by mistake.

"Haven't you an ounce of pride," he said, "to be carrying on with a common chauffeur? Why, he's nothing but a damned—"

I can't put that word down.

God only knows how mad I was by that time, and I suppose the way I looked made him afraid, because he put his hand under his coat. But I took the gun away from him and unloaded it and pitched it on a chair.

All the time I was trying hard to be calm and think straight. I didn't know much about divorces, but I was thinking he might be able to cause Estelle trouble, with lying servants who might say anything for money.

I saw one thing very clear. I'd better leave and not cause anybody any trouble or embarrassment. I could understand why Jimmy was thinking things, but he couldn't call me that word and get away with it.

So I said: "Jimmy, you've been nice to me, and I can't forget it, but you can't call me that. Estelle doesn't need me to defend her. She needs defense a damn sight less than you do, maybe, if the truth was known. You claim to be a gentleman, but I didn't know a gentleman would believe a maid's talk before he heard what his wife had to say. And if you want to know what's the matter with Olive, I'll tell you privately. I guess you don't know, yet, how mean and jealous some maids can be. As for that bill, I think Estelle did mean to pay it, but I paid it myself."

I took my receipt out and made him look at it. And I said what I did about maids because I thought it might warn him about starting anything with a judge.

"Now," I said, "you'll get a check tomorrow for what I won from your tips. I'm leaving here to-night, so don't let this worry you any more. There's just one thing for you to say, and then I'll go."

For a moment he didn't say anything. But by now he's sobered up some; of course he was pretty well lit up when he came. I guess when he found Olive waiting for him, and heard her story, he drank half a bottle. He passed his hand across his face like a man waking up.

"I suppose I went off half cocked," he said, "and I apologize, because I think I was wrong. But if I didn't think so I'd let it stand, and you must admit it all looked bad, and, damn it, it made me mad to think how people might be talking about her."

He looked at Estelle, and I knew he liked her a lot, but maybe not enough to make her happy.

Estelle tried hard to make me stay. She was mad at Jimmy all right, but not altogether sorry, maybe, that he stirred things up so. Women are funny that way, and like to be made a fuss over, and I've seen some that don't mind a real fight over them, with perhaps a man killed.

I thanked her for being so good to me, and felt like crying, but of course didn't, because a man doesn't cry unless maybe his mother died. I don't remember when mine died, but just recall her face a little.

So I took my hat and found the door and left. Lily came running after me with my coat, and grabbed an umbrella and made me take it, because it was raining.

I began to see what a fool I was, taking English lessons and trying to act like I belong, and nearly getting Estelle into trouble. Why, I was even looking at Miss Brewster!

I didn't know where I was going, and the cop thought I was drunk when he said: "Better move along or grab a cab." I got mad and told him to go to hell, which is something not to tell any cop in New York.

Then he got mad and started to use his stick, but didn't. I gave him one first, and then I was sorry and helped him up.

"You damn young fool!" he said. "Why didn't you beat it?"

It wasn't too late, and everything would have been all right if a couple of big cops in a little car hadn't pulled up. They took me to the station, and the cop I knocked down talked to the lieutenant.

I didn't like the idea of being locked up. Then I thought of the card the big politician gave me at the road house, so I took it out and handed it to the lieutenant and said: "Before you do anything you might call up this gentleman. I don't think he'd like to have me locked up."

Well, it was like an order from the mayor telling them to let me go, but the lieutenant tried not to show it, and said: "I don't smell anything on you; besides, you could have got away, but didn't. The officer says he doesn't want to make a charge, so I guess you'd better run along."

I said I certainly wasn't drunk, but must have acted like it.

"I apologize for hitting you," I told the cop. "I must have thought the fight was still on."

When I said that the lieutenant looked at me close, and then at a morning paper he'd been reading.

"Say," he said, "could you be the one that stopped Young Karpy? Damn it, you must be!"

Well, I was glad everything happened the way it did after leaving Estelle's, because it woke me up and kept my mind off of things. Maybe I'd have gone on pitying myself all night, which Estelle said was a bad indoor sport. You can play it outdoors, too, if you're fool enough.

### XIII

I WENT around to Dutch's stand and found him idle. We tackled one of those places without any style where everybody lands after midnight to get something good to eat—ham and eggs, wheat cakes and coffee.

There are stars and chorus girls, ladies and gentlemen in their evening clothes, chauffeurs and night prowlers, and everybody's on the same level and right at home. And unless you've been there, you don't know anything about New York or the people who live in it.

You don't get close to the real thing at high-hat places with a cover charge, which is just another scheme for making you feel you're somebody to be there.

I told Dutch about the fight. He couldn't understand why I wouldn't jump right into the fight game and make my fortune, and he talked so loud that some people reading the sports page of the morning paper caught on.

I left, but made him promise not to

mention my name or say where I lived. The last he didn't know anyway, because I went to a hotel and got a room with a shower bath for two dollars and fifty cents. The same room in a big hotel with a big name would cost you five dollars. A big name's not worth two dollars and fifty cents a night to me.

Next morning I sent a cab for my things, with a note to Lily so Estelle wouldn't be disturbed, and went down town to fix up the check for Jimmy. I found Royal Van Puyster there, just returned from Europe and looking well.

He said Europe was like a half sick man, picking up fine, but afraid to show it for fear of losing our sympathy. He is glad to get back home, but said the big trouble with this country is it's laboring under a cocktail complex caused by the Eighteenth Commandment. He said how can you expect the same law that caused such a complex to cure it?

He was pleased with my record on their books, but looked worried when I told him how much I needed, and of course I didn't say anything about Jimmy. Estelle would know better what to say, if she mentioned it at all, but I said it was not for gambling losses or anything like that.

At 11 A.M. I was about to leave, when a boy came in with the evening paper. That's New York—evening papers in the daytime and the morning papers in the nighttime.

"Look at this," Mr. Chase said, and handed the paper to Royal.

Royal glanced at it and called me back. "You're interested in boxing," he said; "look here."

On the front page is a big headline about the mystery man, the young Adonis, and below is a picture of Young Karpy fighting a question mark. They've made a big story of it, all right; the fight, about me returning my check for the fund, knocking down the cop, getting released, and speculating whether I'm in society. But there are no names mentioned.

It makes a pretty good story, but there's a lot of it made up. It's funny how a newspaper man can be so smart about getting on to so much, and then spoil it by drawing on his imagination.

But I guess they think they've got to print something the other papers won't have, and there's just one sure way of doing it. You can compete with another edi-



tor on getting facts, but it must be hell to have to compete with his imagination.

Then Royal started reading a description of me out loud, and then he threw down the paper and pointed at me.

"You're it!" he said.

Then he and Mr. Chase both stood off and looked at me, and then started laughing. I had to tell it all, but not what happened at Estelle's, which, I thank God, the papers cannot get hold of.

"And what are you going to do?" Royal asked.

"Stay under cover, try to forget all about it, and be a chauffeur until I can work into something better," I told him.

Neither one said anything, but looked at each other. Then Royal put out his hand.

"Boy, shake," he said, and so did Mr. Chase.

I knew they were pleased, and that pleased me. Then I told them about looking for a new job, but didn't say why, of course, because I knew if Estelle said anything about it she'd know how to say it.

Bert says a woman can make half the truth sound like all of it, and none at all sound like part of it.

"Cunningham's lost his chauffeur," Mr. Chase said; "he told me about it yesterday, and is all upset. You'd think he was faced with choosing a wife."

They laughed, but I didn't know why. So they decide to arrange for me to see him. He's a rich bachelor, they said, and lives in a big house on Park Avenue, where I would live, too, if I got the job.

When I reached the hotel my things were there, and a note from Estelle, saying how very sorry she is about what happened, and to come to see her right away, and to let her know where I go. Also one from Jimmy, apologizing again, and telling me not to send any check.

But I did, and got it back, with a letter which put it so I couldn't help but see I'm acting childish, pulling the injured hero stuff, though he didn't say it. So I tore up the check, and Royal invested the money again.

Miss Young gave me Shakespeare's book, and it looks to me that he beat nearly everybody to nearly everything. Why should we think we're so good nowadays when an old-timer like him gave more words their debut than some of us have ever met up with?

I couldn't decide at first what to do about my English lessons; whether to go ahead or not. Every time I took one now I was learning how dumb I was—misuse of the word "like," present tense for past performances, and the Lord knows what!

Yes, it's on account of wanting to see Miss Brewster. That's why I'm going to keep on with my English lessons. And it's also why I wouldn't go into the fight game; at least she's the main reason.

I laid low for days, until the papers wore out their question marks, and people got tired of the mysterious fighting Adonis. Damn it, I'm sick of that word, and I've said it the last time. I knew that all that cheap publicity wouldn't make a hit with a young lady like Miss Brewster.

I was reading something in Shakespeare's book when somebody knocked, and a young lady was standing in the hall of my hotel.

"May I come in, Mr. Cooley?" she said.

"If they allow it here," I said, laughing.

"But they don't have to know it," she said, "and you needn't be frightened." She walked right in. "And you may close the door; this is very important, and must be private. I'm Lola Lane; and I'm so happy—it's going to be the biggest thing I've ever done, a real scoop!"

Well, she's a special feature writer for a newspaper, but she's sure this will be a news story and not a special feature. I was thinking I wouldn't be either kind, but wanted to be nice about it. She's one of these eager girls, living by her brains, but pretty enough to be married.

I didn't know how she found me, and didn't ask. I'm worrying about how not to disappoint her and still not start it all over again. She has already made a note about the book I'm reading.

"Miss Lane," I said, "I admire anybody who can write, and especially a pretty woman like you."

I thought that was a good way to start, because Bert says if you don't know what else to say to a woman, flatter her, but use discretion. A real pretty woman doesn't need flattery, and an ugly one can't use it.

"But," I said, "as I've been pretty quiet the last few days, doesn't it look as if I don't want any more write-ups?"

"But why?" she said. "That's exactly what I came to find out."

"And you'll just give my reasons and

not my name or anything else, and say it's the last time I'll say anything?"

"Why, that'll be wonderful," she said, her eyes shining. "I promise faithfully."

I knew she meant it, and I was pleased because it would have gone hard to disappoint her. I knew just why I wouldn't go into the fight game or play in vaudeville, so I said:

"All right, here goes! You can change the English, but this is the idea:

"I'm not in society. I'm a chauffeur and not educated, but trying to be. A very nice lady is trying to teach me English and maybe I'll find out how to learn other things.

"I learned boxing because I like it. It's a good thing to know, and it keeps a man from getting fat and sluggish.

"I went on the benefit program to please a friend. I'm sorry I won, because Young Karpy is in the fighting game, and I'm not and never will be. But if anybody thinks I'm a better fighter than Karpy, they're fooled. He just didn't train.

"Now a boxer's got to have a quick brain besides a quick body, but his brain can be quick without him knowing much. I want a profession where you've got to think quick and know a lot besides.

"You can see all this fuss in the papers can't help me. It doesn't make me know any more; it doesn't make people like me any better. So I'll appreciate it if nobody else bothers me—not that you've bothered me, because maybe we're both helping each other out."

She put it in her story just like that. She thanked me a lot, and nobody has bothered me since, so after all I'm not sorry Royal's stenographer tipped Miss Lane off.

Some of the papers said I talked as if I had pretty good sense. But one guessed a better reason than any I gave. It said:

Credit the young man with a lot of common sense. Credit him with plenty of determination. But our guess is this: credit him also with being very much in love with some very nice young lady.

Well, when I read that, it was the first time I admitted to myself that I was in love with Carol Brewster. I know I ought not to be, and never on earth can I tell her.

#### XIV

EVERYBODY in the world is in love, Bert says; most people with themselves, a few with somebody else. For a long time I

guess I was like most people, but now I'm like a few.

Of course I have been crazy about a lot of girls, but now it's love. And it's hell, but, as I said before, it's the kind you'd rather be in than not to know her at all.

It makes you different, all right. That time when I didn't want to make love to Miss Hoyt in her studio, I wondered what was the matter with me. Now I know. And there have been some more like Miss Hoyt, so I just kid them along.

Miss Gladys Perry is one. Mr. Cunningham calls her Glad and other little names, because he knows her so well and she is his ward.

Anyway, Miss Perry gives me plenty of chances — invitations, I guess — to start something when Mr. Cunningham is not around, but you'd think he's the only one when he's here. He's nice to her, a lot nicer than some men are to their wives. Maybe if you're a girl you're better off that way sometimes than to have somebody say you're married; I don't know.

Bert says it's human nature to want to get loose from what you're tied to, and the harder they make it to get loose, the more you want to be free.

Miss Perry is not beautiful, but I guess two months ago I would have thought so. She probably was once, but started slipping and nobody can stop it. You'd better see her when she's all beauty doctored up, and not when it has been two days since she has had a permanent wave.

Anyway, I want to keep her friendly because I've got a wonderful job. I mean, for a chauffeur. I have a good salary and a nice room, and sometimes two or three days with nothing to do but study and read while Mr. Cunningham is at Miss Perry's on a visit.

There was another ward he liked so much that he gave her a pension when they broke off. A pension is part of the money you earned while you were working, and they start paying you after you quit. If you live a long time you get it all, but if you don't you're out of luck.

What Mr. Cunningham's profession is I don't know exactly, but I think it's mostly a connoisseur. That means, he is a man who knows if a painting was painted by an old master or by somebody still living.

For instance, if you're a painter, several hundred years from now you'll be an old master and can get thousands of dollars for

something which maybe you can't even sell now. The longer you're dead the more you get, and that's something to be proud of.

Also Mr. Cunningham knows all about old furniture, rugs, statues, vases and other things. If they're sure enough old they're art. Of course the old part is not all of it, but I think it's a pretty big part.

Mr. Cunningham showed me around a little one day while we're waiting for Captain Wilmer, a friend of his who owns a big yacht, and I said I'd been in rich men's houses where everything was brand new and cost a lot, but there was something wrong somewhere. It was not like Mr. Cunningham's house.

He said: "They are people—please don't touch that vase—with no taste."

Later I figured out that persons with no taste are like people who can't tell one kind of food from another, and when they buy their things the rug goes with the furniture about the same as gravy with orange juice. No wonder you don't feel comfortable and at home there.

Well, I drove Captain Wilmer and Mr. Cunningham to an auction. The captain is an Englishman and talks with an accent.

A lot of people think because a man talks with an accent he thinks with an accent, and is not as bright as they are. But a man with an accent might do that kind of thinking about you.

While I was waiting outside the auction, where Captain Wilmer was bidding on some swords for Mr. Cunningham, who should come along but Miss Young, who has been sick for weeks? I was very glad to see her, and she shook my hand as if she meant it.

"I want to thank you for all the flowers you sent me," she said. "It was very sweet of you. And also for the nice thing you said about me in the paper."

We laughed, and she wanted to know if I was ready to resume my lessons. Estelle had told her about my leaving. I said I'd like to start again, but it would have to be on my day off, and then I decided to say what has been on my mind.

"Miss Young," I said, "there's perhaps a reason why I shouldn't return. At least you ought to know about it."

"Tell me, if you think you should."

"It's about one of your students, and she's part of the reason why I'm so anxious to start. I could see her there, perhaps just passing on the street. I guess, Miss

Young, I am hoping I can meet her there somehow and talk to her. Now that's the real truth."

"And as the one responsible for the young ladies while on the premises, you thought I should know it?"

"Yes, that's it, and you can't realize how hard it is to tell you, because—" I didn't know how to say it.

She looked at me a little while, then said gently: "I think I understand. I haven't always been an old maid."

She blew her nose a little, and nice people like Miss Young don't blow their noses loud like a horse.

"You come," she said, and walked away without even saying good-by.

My heart was pounding, and my mind thinking a thousand foolish ideas all at one time. A man in love sure can act like a fool sometimes.

When I turned, Captain Wilmer was standing there, and asked very quietly: "Wasn't that Florence Young?"

I said it was, and just then a boy came out with a long bundle, the swords they had bought. Mr. Cunningham was very much pleased. They're old Japanese swords.

That reminds me, his valet—that's a man's maid—is a Jap named Mito, who's very smart, and will soon be a Ph. D. like Professor Lane, the psychologist. The professor, by the way, is the father of Miss Lola Lane, who interviewed me for the paper. So it may have been her dad who tipped her off; I don't know.

Mito and I are good friends. I don't understand why some people don't like Japs. Bert says it's because the Japanese don't talk enough, but, as a matter of fact, almost all married men feel kindly toward them.

Mito is teaching me from some of his books, and I'm teaching him boxing in exchange for jujutsu, trick wrestling.

Once we had nearly a week to ourselves when Mr. Cunningham went to Baltimore for the tryout of a new show he's backing. If the show's good he makes money; if it's not he loses.

So far, Mito says, Mr. Cunningham's luck has been fifty-fifty since he knew him—two shows going over, two being flops. One of the flops was Miss Perry.

While he was away, she showed up all excited, and wanted to know where Joe is—that's his first name—Joseph Cunning-

ham. And was it true that he's backing a new show and letting that Walton gold-digger make a fool of him?

She laughed, then cried, and laughed and cried both at the same time. I certainly wished I wasn't around.

But Mito stayed calm, fixed a drink, somehow got her to take it, and in five minutes she sobbed herself sound asleep. Then he fixed pillows around her, put a footstool under her feet, and we left. He said she would wake up after awhile and be all right and go home, which she did.

I asked Mito if he drugged the drink, but he only shrugged his shoulders. I guess he did, but I'm just as well off not knowing.

Bert says curiosity is man's salvation, but woman's damnation. I don't think I understand that.

The show played a week in Baltimore and a week in Scranton before it opened in New York. Mr. Cunningham was very nervous when I drove him down for the opening night. But he wasn't too nervous to think I might want to see it, and he told the doorman to pass me in. It was the first time I was ever a first nighter.

Bert says first nighters are the *Babbitts* of Broadway, New York's Main Street. I know I don't understand that.

### XV

WE had come early to the show, and, standing to one side, I could see everybody coming in. Mr. Cunningham talked to a fat, dumpy man he called Herman, who, the program said, produced the show. When the show's backed by somebody, the program doesn't tell that; I guess it's not in good taste to tell.

Well, it looked a procession of everybody I knew. Royal and Claudine arrived first, and I nearly spoke to them, but was glad I didn't.

Not far behind came my old friend Phil Neal and his little Winnie, in their evening clothes. Apparently he's not suffering any yet. They looked like lady and gentleman, which goes to prove you can lie a lot better with your looks than your language.

I still had on my long coat, and, with my cap off, you wouldn't know I was a chauffeur unless you looked close. Mr. Britewell happened to do this, and knew me, but didn't recognize me.

But right after, Ruby and a gentleman arrived and spoke to him. Then she saw

me and shook my hand cordially, and said: "Mr. Britewell, you remember Mr. Cooley?" and he said: "Why it is Mr. Cooley," and offered his hand.

I almost didn't take it, and he knew I had his number. He's a snob, and you don't have to explain what that is, because the word sounds like it.

Bert says that snobs prove that man evolved by himself, and people ought to be ashamed to say God Almighty had anything to do with producing one.

What surprised me a lot was Jimmy and Estelle coming in together, and from the way people began putting their heads together, a lot of others were surprised, too. I was wondering if he had to get the judge's permission.

But what surprised me most was Miss Young coming in with Captain Wilmer. She actually was good-looking, maybe because she looked so happy, which she had a right to be, because, next to Jimmy, he's the most handsome man there. The captain acted as if he thought she was a queen.

English people may not talk like us, but one thing is sure, they've got a way with them. I don't care how many people ask me if I'm English, if that's what they mean.

There are a few more I know; one is Mrs. Bates, whom I met at Ruby's. I've had to lie to her more than once when she telephoned me, and when I saw her husband I understood it. Of course a man has got to eat, but if it all lodges in the middle of him, he has either got to let up, or else bid his wife and his feet farewell.

Finally, who should come in but Miss Gladys Perry? Her seat was in the last row, on the aisle, but she was not in it much, disappearing frequently. I wondered where she kept so much stuff. Between the acts she left the theater, so it was clear that she was not anxious for Mr. Cunningham to notice her.

Well, Mr. Herman had bought some good scenery, and Mr. Cunningham had lent a helping hand to a deserving lady, because both Miss Walton and the show make a big hit. She can dance and sing, and she was so good-looking that you could excuse her for knowing it.

Everybody enjoyed it, so you couldn't be sure who belonged to the claue. A claue is people hired with a pass to enjoy the show with hand clapping whether they do or not.



Between the first and second acts I was standing in the lobby when I heard behind me two voices that I recognized.

"Are you sure you caught his eye?" the man said.

"I told you I did." This was Winnie. The other was Phil.

"Well, don't be so nasty about it. This is too damned important to bungle. Indicate to him to meet you during the intermission, and fix it for to-night sure. Farley says he'll come."

Then they moved away, and I couldn't hear any more. But I noticed where they sat, and watched her pretty close, so missed seeing part of the next act. If you take away the seeing part of a musical comedy, not even your ears get satisfied.

Winnie caught his eye all right—Jimmy Brewster's—and met him in the intermission. I kept away, but could tell it was all fixed; some kind of trick that he doesn't know about.

I'd seen McCarthy come in, so I started looking for him, and found him outside. He told me where I might find Briscoe, and I telephoned him, and was lucky to catch him. He said that if he couldn't get Young Karpy, he'd bring somebody just as good, and they would wait for me at Sixty-Sixth Street and Columbus Avenue.

Then I had another piece of good luck, finding Dutch at his favorite stand, waiting for the theaters to turn out. He was to drive to Estelle's, and follow Jimmy when he came out.

Of course I wasn't sure they would try to pull it off at Winnie's. Dutch was to phone me at the taxi stand on Sixty-Sixth Street, where we would be waiting, provided I managed to get there soon enough, which I almost didn't.

I got back in plenty of time, but missed the curtain speeches. I learned afterward that Mr. Cunningham didn't make any, although he's the man most responsible for it all, and that's one nice part about backing a show.

Miss Perry left first. I got one good look at her face, and if I ever saw a dangerous expression it was hers. Jealous, mad, and drunk she was, but walking straight.

She might commit suicide, but I couldn't do anything about it. There was no driver outside that I knew, and besides she had disappeared.

At the stage entrance, Miss Walton, Mr.

Cunningham, and some others got in the car. He was giving a big celebration at the house, which I knew would be a good one, with the show going over so big. Miss Walton is lucky, because it's not every girl who has a rich man to take so much interest and give her a chance in the world.

When we reached the house I got down and opened the door. Mr. Cunningham stepped out, and just as he was reaching his hand in for Miss Walton a woman rushed toward him from the sidewalk. It was Miss Perry. I saw something gleam in her hand, and gave him a quick, hard push. He limped for several days, but I couldn't help it.

The revolver shot hit the door handle. I made a leap and grabbed the little gun with one hand, and put my other over her mouth.

I know how hungry some newspapers are for a good scandal, but I guess they're hungry because they've got so many hungry readers.

Well, I almost ran with Miss Perry into the house, telling them all to come in quick, which they did. I remember telling one girl, who's making too much noise, to shut up, which she did. That's not nice to say to a woman, but it's nicer than reading all about your employer's disgrace in the newspapers.

Mito took charge of Miss Perry, who had fainted. I told Mr. Cunningham it would be a good thing to make everybody stay in and be quiet. I'd see what the cop had to say when he showed up; and could I be free for awhile?

"Of course you can," was all he said, but he shook my hand in a way that said more than if he had written a book about it.

Some of the other guests were arriving when I came out, and a cop was asking everybody if they heard a shot.

"Did you hear one?" he asked me.

"I thought I did," I said, "but it might have been a back-fire." I got in the car. "I'm going west, officer; can I give you a lift?"

"No thanks," he said. "Guess I'd better stick around awhile."

And I was off in a hurry.

That cut through the park certainly did come in handy. Briscoe and Karpy were waiting, and Dutch phoned just as I drove up.

It was to be at Winnie's all right, and Jimmy had just gone up. Of course, Phil

Neal and Farley, his good-looking crook friend, would arrive in a few minutes.

I had their game figured out. A rich and prominent man like Jimmy Brewster was too big a temptation for them to pass up.

We stopped a block from the house and walked the rest on the park side. I told them something of the situation, explained about wanting no gun play and even no rough-house; fists would do, and we might not even need them. I wasn't sure that my key would still work, but three of us could push the door in if we had to.

Dutch joined us, and a minute or two later we saw Phil and Farley entering the house. It was one of these places where one boy half runs both elevator and switchboard, so when the elevator disappeared we slipped in and up the stairs, three flights, to Winnie's door.

We could hear voices, but waited just a little so they'd have time to make Jimmy a proposition. It was what they call blackmail, and Dr. Kirby testified in a case like that once in Pittsburgh.

The key worked all right. It was fortunate I had Miss Perry's little gun, because Farley made a move. They had to hold up their hands until Briscoe took the crook's gun and Phil's.

They hadn't scared Jimmy, but had him in a tight place, which I could see from his expression. Winnie was acting the part of Miss Innocence, but gave herself away by getting mad when we stepped in.

Phil slipped away from Karpy and made for her.

"You she-rat!" he said. "You've double-crossed me!"

He would have struck her, but got a punch himself from Briscoe. I told Phil, who got up without taking the count, that she hadn't done any such thing. Then I asked Jimmy:

"What was their proposition?"

"Only fifty thousand," he said, and lit a cigarette. "And you've seen me again making a fool of myself. I'm a bright boy, I am, playing with my bootlegger's wife!"

"Don't fool yourself," Phil said. "She's no more my wife than she is yours. I wouldn't be tied to that hell-cat for all the money you've got!"

Winnie tried to get at him, and returned his compliments with interest. After all, my dope on them wasn't so bad, and from the way they glared at each other I doubt

if they could have got along worse together married.

Jimmy and I talked over what to do with them, and I phoned Royal Van Puyster. Phil Neal nearly went wild when I did that, and said he'd give me any amount not to, and he had always been sorry he beat me out of that sixteen hundred dollars.

Jimmy left before Royal came, because I couldn't see that Royal had to know about him, and Jimmy was pleased when I suggested it. Royal was certainly surprised at seeing Phil, who had beat them out of eleven thousand dollars when he worked for him and Mr. Chase, but also on account of seeing Winnie, Claudine's old maid.

We decided to let Winnie go to bed, and all of us sat up until morning playing poker, twenty-cent limit. It put Phil and Farley in a funny situation, both knowing the other's tricks; they watched each other like hawks and had to play straight.

Then we ordered breakfast sent in, and after that all went down to Royal's office. The three would-be blackmailers signed a statement that Royal dictated, and I filled in Jimmy's name afterward, and a notary public in the office made them swear to it. Later I gave the document to Jimmy.

Then Phil had to pay the eleven thousand dollars. He had it all right, being a successful bootlegger but still not contented. I got my sixteen hundred, too. After the checks had been cashed we let them go.

Mr. Chase had already called up Mr. Cunningham about me, and I went to sleep, but first sent some flowers to Miss Perry, whom they had taken to a private hospital.

I was sorry that I had to handle her a little rough. But it was not on this account that she was in the hospital, but for drinking all week and being nervous and all.

Briscoe and Karpy got a thousand dollars apiece from Jimmy, and so did old Dutch. They all hoped I would have some more business for them soon, but I sincerely don't. Estelle got the most expensive sable coat Jimmy could find, and if that didn't make her suspicious she's not like most women.

So everything came out all right, and the papers got cheated twice in one night. I guess Phil and Farley and Winnie don't love me a lot, but Miss Perry was very grateful that she didn't shoot anybody.

She was O. K. in a few days, and will

go on the pension list, I guess. Mr. Cunningham is calling on Miss Walton, who lives in a fine hotel.

## XVI

ONE day I went to Miss Young's school, and surprised her about how much I had learned from Mito and his books.

What a different woman she was! Some beauty doctor had a new customer, but maybe Captain Wilmer is entitled to some credit.

Beauty doctors may be able to change your face, but they can't do anything helpful to your expression. Paint and powder cover up wrinkles all right, but they can't make a woman look happy. I guess only a nice husband, or maybe a good prospect, can do that.

But not seeing Miss Brewster at the school was a big disappointment to me. I didn't know she had finished, and was making her debut at the Ritz that very night, until I saw her picture in the paper.

Well, it wouldn't have been so good, her brother's picture in the same edition. I certainly was glad we didn't bring the police into it.

Mr. Cunningham asked if I'd mind driving him once more, to the Ritz that night. I wondered what he meant by once more. He was nice and all, but it didn't sound good.

First we went to the theater a little while, where I saw some of the show again from the front and him from the back. Fannie, the Mount Vernon lady toper, was another who knew me, but didn't recognize me—and it was heartily mutual.

Bert says a woman can be a worse snob than a man, just as they can go men one better in nearly every way, from hating to loving. They sure are extremes.

It was the right extreme I saw, the loveliest one that could live, when I drove up to the Ritz. Jimmy was helping her out of the car ahead. She was arriving for her debut, with a lot of others, too, in beautiful gowns and all.

Jimmy smiled to me, and she saw me when I was opening the door for Mr. Cunningham. I had the worst feeling I ever had in my life, a sick, hopeless, sinking kind, and I didn't remember Mr. Cunningham's directions or anything much for awhile.

But I kept saying to myself: "You fool! You fool! You fool!" I knew there was

just one thing for me to do, never to see her again.

I laughed out loud about a common chauffeur taking English lessons and trying to learn from Mito's books. And I knew I had to do something to snap out of it, so I drove fast through the park to start with.

At One Hundred and Tenth Street two girls flirted with me. It's queer, but I was glad of that, and picked them up and started back through the park. I stopped the car and started to get back with them, feeling reckless.

Then one called me "baby," and at the same time I got a whiff of cheap perfume. I felt so disgusted with myself that I couldn't get behind the wheel soon enough, and put them out at Seventy-Second Street. All the names they called me didn't bother me a bit.

There I was just a short distance from Professor Lane's, and I was glad I thought about him. He was pleased to see me, and started to introduce me to his daughter, but I explained that I already knew she was Miss Lola Lane, the special feature writer, and we laughed about the way she introduced herself that day. Of course Dr. Lane knew all about me being a chauffeur, and we had another laugh when he called me the chauffeur-capitalist-intellectual.

His son Jack goes to Columbia. He's a big, good-natured boy who plays football, a center—which means he's the main shock absorber. Jack invited me to have dinner some time soon at his clubhouse.

Well, I asked Miss Lola how the special features were coming along, and she blushed, and her father said there's only one special feature now, who had just stepped over to Columbus Avenue, but would be back soon. They were to be married in about two months.

He came back all right. She heard his step before any one, and, with a wonderful look on her face, ran to meet him.

And then, when he came in, I nearly fell over. I was introduced to our friend Farley, Phil's blackmailing partner!

God, it was tough, shaking his hand. We both managed to say the usual thing with our mouths, but were holding a very different conversation with our glances. It was about like this:

"You dirty dog, what are you up to now, Farley?"

"You've caught me again, damn you,

Cooley, but you'd better let me save my face."

"Save your face? What about her?"

"Well, if you want to humiliate her, go ahead."

"You're right, but you'd better make it snappy and beat it. I can't stand this."

Well, Dr. Lane started talking about some new tests, and was going to try us out on them. But before he got to that part, I looked at Farley, and he said he felt a bit dizzy, and I volunteered to drive him over to a drug store, and we left.

But not before Miss Lola carried on over it, petting him and all, and I could have put him out for good right there. Why is it so many women love crooks, whether they know their crookedness or not?

I had been thinking pretty fast, and decided to try a big bluff and get him out of town if I could, without having to use Jimmy's affidavit. So outside I asked him what his game was.

"Hell, you know as well as I do," he said.

"I don't," I said, "unless she's about to get some money."

"Well, if you don't know, why should I tell you?"

Talk about a madman, he was wild and reckless!

"You don't have to," I said, "but you might do some fast thinking about what's your program."

"Damn you!" he said. "Can't you give me a little time? I guess I'll lay off, that's all."

"Don't kid yourself," I said, and this was my bluff; "you're going to do more than that or have the police on your trail. You've got quite a record, you know."

That was a guess, because I didn't know for sure. But no man is a crook all of a sudden.

Anyway, he thought I knew more than did, so I said:

"To-morrow at two o'clock you're going to meet me at the Grand Central Station. You'll phone her and say you're leaving for the West to see a special doctor, and in Chicago you'll report at Chase and Van Puyster's office there. They'll be expecting you, and you'll keep right on reporting for six months, and if you ever show your face in the Lane house again, or try to meet Lola anywhere, you'll have a long time to think about it in Sing Sing."

Well, he must have been wanted pretty

bad for something—murder, I guess—because he croaked me a dozen times with his eyes next day when I saw him off. His last words were that I'd get mine all right, and I believe I'd better watch my step awhile.

Maybe I should have turned him in, but I don't believe Miss Lane could have stood it, learning all about him at once. It's hard enough, I guess, the way it is.

Maybe there's a chance for me now, not much, but still a chance, because I'm not a chauffeur any more. I've found out what Mr. Cunningham meant, but I don't know exactly what I am yet.

## XVII

It's a queer world. That handsome crook, Farley, first made Miss Lane's acquaintance purposely to get something on me!

He and Phil Neal had doped out that she was to be a ward of Mr. Cunningham's. Can you beat that?

That Farley would actually go to Chicago I hadn't much believed. My idea was that he'd stick around and try to pull off the runaway marriage stunt, maybe the very next morning, and so I knew it was important for Professor Lane to know about him right away, and have some evidence, too, if he insisted on seeing it.

Of course Dr. Lane's a smart man, a Ph.D., and knows all about mind tests. But he had been so busy with what's inside of people's heads that he hadn't taken the trouble to take a good look at the outside of Farley's flat-backed head, and see there's something wrong with it.

As to Lola, she must have liked him from the start, and love, I guess, makes a glare like headlights. If neither party has dimmers, the marriage is apt to be a collision.

So, after driving Mr. Cunningham home from the Ritz, I changed my clothes and drove over to talk to Jimmy Brewster. They were just arriving from Miss Carol's debut, and she was there, and some others, talking it all over, I guess, but I didn't know this until Jimmy ushered me into the room.

This time it was not an explanation, for he said to her: "Of course you remember Mr. Cooley."

She gave me her hand, and so I touched her for the first time. The warmth of her



hand, and the look in her eyes, and the happiness and the sweetness of her filled me, and then I was frightened that I had dared even to think of love and her in the same thought.

I forgot anybody else was there, and heard myself congratulate her on her coming out, and I just couldn't help telling her with my eyes how I loved her, but without any hope. And I guess I would have stood there and made a fool of myself, but Jimmy broke in and introduced me to the rest, and Estelle made me sit beside her and talk.

She noticed I was looking at Miss Carol, and she had a queer look. I got red, I could feel it, and she pressed my hand just a little. I was mighty grateful for that, because it showed Estelle wasn't so badly shocked.

From what she said, a lot of people knew about the affair in front of Mr. Cunningham's, and I didn't like it. Some of the women told it, I guess, although Mito said Mr. Cunningham made them all promise not to.

Bert says the best way to get something well advertised is to ask a woman to promise she'll not tell a living soul. He thinks the idea could be capitalized.

Then Estelle said: "Perhaps I shouldn't tell you, but I think something very nice is going to happen to you, and I shall be very, very happy over it."

Just then they all started leaving, and I told Jimmy about Farley, and he suggested that we ask Dr. Lane to come down to his office early next morning. I didn't know Jimmy had an office, but he has, and spends a lot of time in it attending to his investments.

Maybe Bert's right. He says rich people work harder than poor people. They have to; they've got more to keep, and besides, most of them had good exercise making it.

But Jimmy's idea wouldn't do, because that would leave Lola alone; her mother is dead. So we decided we would have to call on the professor early, and Jimmy would show his affidavit, if necessary.

We called, and of course Dr. Lane was very much upset about the situation. He was very much relieved, though, when I telephoned in the afternoon from Grand Central, saying that Farley had gone.

I saw Royal, so he could wire his Chicago office, and it was then I learned why Far-

ley was willing to leave. Royal had a private detective watching him, on account of his bad record, which he had looked up, and because of the way Farley looked at me when he had to sign the affidavit.

Farley knew he was being shadowed, but couldn't shake Royal's man, and was willing to go anywhere, I guess, for a little while. His record was so bad he was not supposed to go below the dead line. That's a line in New York that crooks can't cross, unless they want to pull off a robbery on the other side.

Mr. Cunningham was away several days, and when he returned he said I was to have dinner with him that evening, and for me to dress, by which he meant to wear my evening clothes. In society, if you're not dressed it doesn't mean you're naked, but that you're wearing your day clothes. If you're a lady, the more you are dressed the less you have on.

And what happened to me shows how lucky some people are. And Bert says it's chance more than anything else that decides our lives.

We are born by accident, raised by caprice, educated by fancy; marriage is a gamble, our choice of occupation a guess, hence the grand result is a matter of plain luck.

I asked him where did will power and character come in. "They're important," he said, "but when you come right down to it, will power is our self-starter, while character is only a disguise." And I think it's a good thing to remember what Bert says, even when I don't understand it, because maybe some day I will.

Anyway, Mr. Cunningham and I rode to a big hotel, and he had a new chauffeur. Brown, he called him. His name's no more Brown than mine, but he's Pete Cody, who sold me his clothes so he could get back to Pittsburgh that time. I tipped him off to the job.

On the way down, Mr. Cunningham didn't say much, and of course I didn't, but wondered what was going to happen to me.

We went through the lobby to the main dining room, which was filled with guests, and it was like a painting, with the lights and jewels and the nice-looking waiters and all. There was quite a number of people waiting to get in, but our table was reserved, so the head waiter bows us right in.

We had dinner, and Mr. Cunningham

didn't tell me all that he had in mind, because I thought he was holding something back, and I wondered what. But it was enough; too much, in fact, for me to grasp, and I'm still trying to realize it all.

He knew all that had happened to me since I came to New York. Some things he didn't actually mention, but I could tell there was a very little he doesn't know, including what I said to Lola Lane for the paper, and all about Farley and Phil Neal.

Also about Miss Young and Mito teaching me, and I think he knows about Carol Brewster, but I don't know. I guess most of it he learned from Royal and Mr. Chase.

Anyway, he didn't ask any real personal questions, or talk about Lola's trouble or things like that, and never once did he say that I did the right thing or the wrong thing, or stuff like that.

You expect women to spread it on, or else raise hell with you, depending not on what you did, but how they happen to feel about it. Men mainly let you know what they think by what they do about it.

And so Mr. Cunningham let me know what he thought when he said:

"Now, young man, you've been mixed up in a sufficient number of escapades to last you for awhile. It's going to be the quiet life for you for a couple of years.

"What I want to do has little or no relationship to that unfortunate incident in front of the house. I have already thanked you for what you did.

"I've investigated you as thoroughly as I can right now, and after careful thought, I propose that you make my home yours, and devote about two years to general study under competent teachers, with your summers spent in travel. Perhaps you will then know what career to choose, and start preparing yourself accordingly.

"One thing more—let what money you have invested stay where it is, and don't touch it. I have the fullest confidence in Mr. Chase's judgment. We are invited to join some people at the theater, and it's time to go."

He got right up, and I had no chance to say a word. But I think if he had waited I would have said: "Thank you, Mr. Cunningham," and let it go at that.

But Mr. Cunningham knew from my expression how I felt, and I guess he also knew why I was kind of quiet all evening. I was thinking that he showed a lot of confidence in me, and I'd have to work

damned hard to make good. So, after all, if I had thanked him for an hour, it wouldn't have meant anything, but it's what I do about it later.

It was a box party we went to, but mixed, some in society and some not, of which I was one of the latter, but maybe I'm now on the fringe. And since Captain Wilmer has met up with Miss Young, and started going with her, she's now accepted, because he's the son of an earl in England.

Over there, titles take the place of wealth, but some of them get it here in America by swapping half their title for all a girl's money. I guess it's sometimes a bad bargain, because they have to take the scheming girl with it.

The show was a funny farce, adapted from the French for the American stage. And Bert says French plays used to be toned down a bit so they wouldn't shock us too much, but now they have to be toned up a lot so they'll shock us enough. And I believe it, because in this one the twin beds looked like a single.

I was introduced to everybody, and one was Miss Lulu Parsons, who remembered seeing me at Miss Young's. She was very nice to me, and afterwards we had several dances at the night club we all drove to. She asked me to call, and showed she liked me. Why is it that you can tell what nearly every girl thinks about you except the one you think about the most?

When we finally got home, Mr. Cunningham showed me my new quarters, a suite they call it, and it's not pronounced the way it's spelled, but like this: "sweet." He said he hoped I'd be comfortable, and then said good night.

All my things had been moved, but I found some more, something from nearly everybody I knew, with their cards or a note on top or inside. When I had seen everything, with my initials on them and the messages which I knew they meant, well, I blew my nose. That's the best way I can describe my feelings.

There was even something from old Dutch, and how in hell did that get there? Why, that old taxi night hawk had spent real money for a silver badge, with the same number on it I used to have.

Darn his old hide! He made me use my handkerchief again.

And what Mr. Cunningham hadn't thought of couldn't be remembered by any one. There was a little pocket memoran-

dum book with the names of all the places he has charge accounts, where I'm to buy anything I want.

Next, a check with a note attached, suggesting where to open my checking account, and then a wallet with gold edges, and my name and some money in it, and cards to several clubs. Also cards for me; I mean, with my name and address.

There was only a card from Jimmy, which said: "Young man, be patient."

Well, I certainly had enough things not to make me impatient, but I certainly wondered what he meant.

If anybody could sleep after that, they ought to never wake up. I couldn't even close my eyes for a long time. Next to thinking about how fortunate I was, I thought most about how hard I would study.

I guess it's like Bert says: happiness is a flirt, she can be caressed, but never won.

Well, the telephone rang, and it was Carol on the wire. She said:

"Clem, dear, come right over. I want to congratulate you, and say how happy I am about it all."

I jumped out of bed and sat down hard on the floor, and woke up.

I wish I was fool enough to believe in dreams!

### XVIII

MR. CUNNINGHAM thought that a few days' change would be good for me, so I decided to spend a part of it in Pittsburgh. Of course not many people choose Pittsburgh to spend their vacation in, unless they admire night life in the daytime, but I wanted to see what the foggy old town looked like now.

Once, when I was a kid, a rich coal man sent some of us orphans to the country. I had a notion that I'd like to see that farm again. When the wind blew, the leaves of the big grapevine turned up their silver sides to the sun.

But before I left New York I tried out the new car Jimmy Brewster gave me. It was custom-made, and that was why his card said be patient, I guess. Everything about it is perfect, with a wonderful engine, and the only thing I don't like is the fact that people stare at it.

In Pittsburgh I looked around at different places I had worked or lived. Mrs. Cooley had died.

She was not my mother, but raised me

for awhile until Judge Bassett took me away from her because the neighbors said she wasn't kind to me. I was glad to be away from her, but I was sorry to learn she was dead.

Judge Bassett, who gave me the letter of introduction to Bert Green, and wrote to him besides, had retired and gone to California.

I saw Dr. Kirby. He said he had cut out his prescription business on the stuff, and expected to lose all his best practice.

"Prohibition," he said, "is the best advertisement liquor ever had. The law makes it attractive by making it hard to get. That forbidden fruit scheme doesn't work any better now than it did in the Garden of Eden."

I stayed two days, but Pittsburgh seemed like a strange place, and I was not sorry to start back home. I did meet three or four of my old girls, regular flappers, but declined all invitations.

I noticed one thing—in Pittsburgh and the towns I passed through the girls wear less skirt and show more of the knock in their knees than they do in New York. I guess the reason is that they're trying to look like the Manhattan charmers from Memphis and Milwaukee, posing for the pictures in Hollywood.

I had decided to spend the rest of my vacation in New York. One reason was that I wanted to see Pete Cody, Mr. Cunningham's new chauffeur—now named Brown.

I had agreed to his use of a fake name, because he said his former wife was threatening his life, but in Pittsburgh I learned he was wanted for forgery. I guess being left that money, which he spent in New York pretty quick, started him on the wrong track, and he wanted some more easy dough.

My idea was to suggest that he quit, because knowing what I did I had to do that or tell Mr. Cunningham, which latter course I didn't like. Pete was once a friend—not a pal, but close enough not to send him to the pen.

I found him at the garage, preparing to drive Mr. Cunningham somewhere, and told him I had been to Pittsburgh, and maybe it would be a good thing for him to resign his job. He got mad and nasty.

"So if I don't quit, you'll tell him, that's the grand idea, eh?" he said.

I said I didn't know what I'd do.

"Got pretty stuck up since this rich woman chaser took you in, ain't you?" he said. "I guess I know his game. You're the 'come on' boy, the young sheik who acts as bait for the young—"

That's as far as he got. I couldn't help putting my weight into the blow.

I did give him time to get ready, but one good wallop took all the fight and nastiness out of him. I helped him up, and he took it all back and said he'd quit next day.

He was the kind that couldn't see I meant to do him a favor, and so of course I had another enemy. So there I was, nearly mixed up in something new, when Mr. Cunningham told me not to and thought I was hundreds of miles away.

What Pete Cody said about me didn't worry me any; it's the other part I got mad at. Mr. Cunningham isn't married, and if he is a woman chaser he couldn't get very far if there weren't men chasers.

Anyway, as soon as Pete left the garage on an errand, I drove to Dr. Lane's. I thought Lola might be pretty blue about not hearing from Farley, and would enjoy a ride in the country.

She was standing before the window as I drove up. Sadness was in her face, before she noticed me—a wondering kind of sadness.

I can excuse a man for nearly anything but tricking a woman. I hope there is a special hell for Farley's kind, something that burns like a hot fire in his mind, so that no matter where he goes it's still with him.

Dr. Lane was away, so we started out, and Lola made a fuss over the nice, new car. She was trying, like a good sport, to hide her grief.

### XIX

WE drove out by the Grand Concourse, headed for some quiet road, which isn't easy to find around New York on a sunshiny Sunday. Everybody's out then, and no matter what road you take it looks as if they're all on that road. And you get annoyed, and wonder what right everybody has there.

From the questions Lola asked about the night Farley and I left her house, I knew Dr. Lane had not told her anything. But I was beginning to think he should tell her, and not make her endure any more doubt and waiting.

I thanked her again for the book ends

she had sent me; of course I wrote everybody who sent something. She was pleased that Mr. Cunningham thinks they're nice, and she has a right to be. He certainly knows if a thing is correct.

Well, I got tired of trying to steer among all those Sunday drivers, and enjoy myself, too, so I said:

"Miss Lane, how about burning a little gas up into Westchester County, where the cars aren't in a procession? We'll avoid Briarcliff, where Mr. Cunningham usually goes for dinner at the Lodge, but I know an inn not far from there where the cooking is excellent, too. It's called the Lone Wolf; near Chappaqua. What do you say?"

"I say yes, but what if we happen to meet Mr. Cunningham?"

"Not a chance," I said, and stepped on it after we got on the Bronx Parkway, where the law permits thirty-five miles an hour.

My new car just floated along, purring up the slight grades like a sewing machine going through muslin, and soon we passed the pretty little towns of the Harlem Valley—Hawthorne, Thornwood, Pleasantville, and through Chappaqua. This last place is where Horace Greeley lived, and after living there among the beautiful hills I don't see why he advised young men to go West.

The meal was what I said it would be, and afterward we strolled about under the towering old trees around the inn. And I noted that the grapevine leaves turn up their silvery sides in New York State just as they did back in Pennsylvania when I was a charity kid.

I also ran across another memory of that ten-day vacation on the farm. It was the scent of hay, new mown and drying in the sun.

My throat went tight suddenly, but I knew it wasn't because of my poverty-stricken boyhood. No man would ever want to relive kid days that always seemed cold, and hungry, and lonely.

No, it was not that. I simply realized that every delightful sight or scent or sound—sunset, flowers, or music—brought Carol Brewster living and breathing into my heart.

I couldn't tell all this to a girl whose heart was breaking, too, so I decided to do some more mileage to occupy our minds. Several Sundays I had driven Mr. Cun-



ningham in the direction we headed, but always on the main traveled roads, and now I picked out the side ones.

They are called horse roads up there, but that means only that they are marked with signs for the bridle path association. Automobiles can use them, too, taking care to turn out alongside the narrow pike to let riders pass, if you are any kind of a gentleman in your driving.

Finally, just as we were approaching a narrow culvert, a big car appeared around a bend on the other side. I was nearest and started to cross.

But the other driver came on fast, trying to beat me to it, and I didn't like that. I stopped in the middle of the road, to make him go into the soft going when he reached us, and then I saw who it was.

Pete Cody was the road hog, and he had nobody inside. That didn't look right to me.

"Move over there, Cooley!" he yelled. "This road ain't yours."

He took a quick look behind him, and away back I saw two people running our way. Any one would know something was wrong now.

"What's your big hurry?" I said.

"To hell with you!" he said, and pulled a gun. "Back up into the grass."

"Don't you do it," Lola said. "He doesn't dare to shoot. He's only bluffing."

Of course I was going to obey Pete, with her in there, and maybe I'd have done it with me in there; I don't know. We were sitting pretty low already—you know the kind of car—but we crouched down some more.

Then he opened up. After two or three wild shots, probably meant to scare us, he had another idea, to turn around and beat it down a side lane. He started backing into the grass, and I saw my chance. I drove ahead and hit him just at the right time, when he was shifting gears again.

The bump butted his car over on its side. It was one of those big top-heavy jobs and was already leaning the other way, and both conditions helped.

He leaped out and glanced around for his gun, but didn't see it. Then he ran for the fence, and was over it before I could reach him.

I looked for the gun, and there was Lola pouncing on it. Like a fool I was going to waste the remaining shots, although he was out of range, but she said:

"Use the car!"

I never would have thought of that. A glance showed that my fenders weren't even dented, because the heavy bumpers have done the work.

Lola was going to jump in beside me, but I said: "Wait! This may be a wreck." I hit the fence a good one, and the old rails flew.

All of which didn't take more than thirty seconds, and of course Pete stood no chance to outrun a straight eight in a big open meadow. On the other side of that road was a regular forest, which shows how he used his head—about the way I did!

Pete walked back ahead of the car, talking bloody murder to me, and just then Mr. Cunningham and Miss Walton came up, ready to drop. When he saw who I was, he sat right down on the side of the road and looked at me like a doting father admiring his only son.

Well, finally Mr. Cunningham said that "Brown" would pay for frightening and humiliating Miss Walton, and taking everything they had, car and all, and leaving them on a lonely road. He hates publicity the way I do, but he was mad clear through, and said he didn't give a damn this time.

He had heard the gun play, I guess, and now he knew who the target was. That gave me an idea, and I said:

"Pete, I'm taking out the good cartridges and putting this gat in your pocket. Stand still, or I'll knock you kicking! You're such a crook that I won't give you a chance to frame me up as owning the gun."

A crowd began to come from nowhere at all, some on foot and some in cars, and with them was a motor cycle cop—and cops and reporters sometimes work for one another. This one was called Jim by everybody there, and he was a cool and efficient officer.

He took us all off to one side, and listened to our various charges against Pete. Then he said:

"Well, fellow, what's the answer?"

"They're all drunk and out joy riding with other men's wives," Pete said. "But I'll give you the low down: I'm wanted in Pittsburgh for forgery."

I guess he realized that he'd get about twenty years in New York State, while he might have to do much less in Pennsylvania.

"Easy enough, if you folks agreed," Jim said. "I'll book him as a fugitive from justice."

He commandeered a flivver, without a top, and bundled Pete and the motor cycle into it, and away they went to the local jail. I put up the rumble seat, and Mr. Cunningham and Miss Walton rode with me to a garage, where we ordered a wrecking car to get the limousine on its feet, and a chauffeur to drive it back to New York.

Of course I told my party all that I knew about Pete Cody, *alias* Brown. They were glad that everything turned out all right, and nobody had to be a witness against him.

That is, maybe Miss Walton wasn't as glad as she might be. There would have been swell publicity in the holdup for her show.

To celebrate, Mr. Cunningham said: "Clem, we'll get in touch with your lawyer friend, Mr. Green, and have him join us. And then we'll see what there is to see."

Among the things we saw was a concert.

In New York the law says you can't give all of a show on Sunday, but can give part if you call it a concert. So they cut out the first part where she's learning to sew, and the last part where she comes out in the wedding dress, which I bet she didn't make, and it's a legal concert.

Bert says a smart lawyer can find a hole in nearly any law. If he's extra smart, like an ex-judge or ex-cabinet member, or the legislator who wrote it, he can make the hole so big it's all you can see.

After the concert we went to a night club, a new one to me. It was called a supper club, and the idea is to make you eat more so you can hold more hootch and still walk out straight.

I suddenly noticed that Bert was having a grand time. He kept us all laughing, including Lola, but it wasn't on account of too much drinking, because two is his limit.

Once he told me he had committed every indiscretion but two: get drunk and get married. He hadn't done the first for fear he'd do the second.

But I was beginning to think he might yet do the second without doing the first. My lawyer friend had his eye on Lola Lane. Honest!

On the program was a dancing couple, and I heard Miss Walton say she thought their dancing was suggestive, but not too

much so, and I guess that's why everybody applauded it. It's this way:

If a girl rolls her stockings high, you wish she'd roll them lower. If she rolls them lower, you wish she'd take them off. If she takes them off, you just see bare legs, and one look is enough.

At home, after the supper club, I found a note from Estelle inviting me to go to a house party at her country place. She said: "Carol will be here."

I was so excited I could hardly sleep, and next day I was still so bad I could hardly get ready. But Mito helped me some. I wonder if being in love would get a Jap excited.

There are two kinds of house parties, the kind where you wear your pyjamas in bed, and the kind where you wear them all over the place. Of course, when people do that they're drunk, and when they pass out they're ready for bed.

Our house party is a nice crowd, but there's a couple of college boys I don't care for. Hell, they both act as if they owned her, and of course a girl like Carol can't be rude.

One of them is Dan Shade, Jr., whose father makes automobiles—and you couldn't give me a single one he makes. Young Daniel thought he had to congratulate me right before the crowd—all but Bert and Lola, who came later on—about the affair in front of Mr. Cunningham's.

The way he did it, you'd think the job wasn't quite complete until he put the stamp of his approval on it. I was mad, but kept calm.

Everybody started in doing anything they liked but me, which was on account of the Shade kid. He thinks he's pretty good, not ever wearing a hat anywhere.

Anyway, he comes galloping and whistling down the stairs. If you ever go to a house party and want to show you are used to them, come galloping and whistling down the stairs and say:

"When the clock struck one  
She heaved a sigh,  
And her pa heaved him in the  
O-o-o-o-shun."

Then, without stopping, grab the most beautiful girl there and pull her outside, and stay out there God knows how long. That's what the Shade boy did.

I nearly got the sulks, which is the same as self-pity, but in an aggravated form.

I quit it before anybody noticed it, and went out with Lola and was gay as hell all over the place.

My grabbing Lola made Bert sore, I could tell that, and he was gay with Miss Hoyt, who was all the time watching Captain Wilmer with Miss Young. The captain was nearly happy, and would be if he could shake Miss Pettigrew, who is still pulling her "Don't you just lo-o-o-ve it?" stuff.

Bert says a house party is a perpetual maneuver to be with somebody else. He knows, because the other college boy grabbed Lola, and Miss Hoyt finally managed to attach herself to Captain Wilmer and Miss Young, and before Bert knew what it was all about, Miss Pettigrew was dragging him off to the garden.

I'm glad Bert's in love with Lola, and that nobody told her about Farley. He's a good antidote for that crook.

He said I was a perfect fool to let that young Shade walk away with Carol Brewster that way, and for me to forget all that damned nonsense about not being in society.

"Love," he said that night, walking up and down the room and making gestures, "has the right of way over everything, and knows no stop signals, whether wealth or position, custom or tradition, prior claim or subsequent attachment."

I played safe next morning, when I took Carol for a ride, and she admired my car, and asked how did Miss Lane like it. I wanted to tell her just why I took Lola driving, but of course I didn't.

Then she said Lulu Parsons told her I was such a nice dancer, and I'd been so nice to her. I guess that Parsons girl is the kind that can say practically nothing, but imply a whole lot.

Then Carol said: "They're pretty names—Lola and Lulu."

I couldn't stand this any longer. I stopped the car and turned toward her and looked into her eyes.

"Carol," I said, "my eyes have to tell you what I dare not say. And it has been that way ever since the first day when I saw you in Miss Young's study. It will be that way always."

For a moment more she looked into my eyes with a meaning I couldn't understand. I had to do something quickly, so I started the engine and drove like a fool—with her in there.

When we reached the house she just pressed her little hand over the back of mine for a second, just her way of saying good-by, and jumped out and ran inside. I haven't seen her for five hours.

I spent four of them waiting for her to come down, but I couldn't stand it any longer, so came here to my room to be alone. I can't get her out of my mind, no matter how hard I try. I can still feel the touch of her hand.

## XX

ABOUT four o'clock Estelle sent for me. Carol was there with her, but only glanced once when I came in.

"This little girl has a slight cold, I think," Estelle said, "and must stay indoors awhile. You're to keep her company and entertain her. That's a great privilege, and you may thank me."

"I do, Estelle," I said, and she left us alone together.

It was our second time like that, and yet I felt I had known her a long, long time. I think the moment you really love a girl, you know her better than anybody else in the world.

She wore a simple dark dress, and sat before the fireplace in a big deep chair, and in the glow of the fire her face was a little pale. She was very quiet and gentle, and her eyes were soft and kind to me. I was happy.

I asked about her cold, and hoped the ride didn't cause it, and she said it really was nothing and she enjoyed the ride. For awhile we didn't say anything, sitting quietly and looking into the fire, and sometimes we looked up, and each look of mine told her again what I had said that morning.

When you watch the flames in a fireplace you think into the future and wonder what is before you. Would the time come when Carol and I would sit before a fire like this and remember this hour, our first quiet time alone when she was eighteen and I was twenty-three?

I knew I would always remember the picture of her that moment, and I turned to look once more. It was like stepping back into the present, and I was glad that everything was ahead and not behind.

I was not afraid any more. It seemed as though the picture I had seen was real.

She turned her eyes to me, and they said that I could say something to her, but

please be gentle. She was happy, but frightened a little.

So I took her soft little hands in my big rough ones and said: "Carol, I love you. I haven't any right to. I haven't anything—money or education, or even a name.

"I don't know who my father was. I remember my mother's face just a little, and it was dear and sweet like yours.

"And I guess she's the only one who has ever loved me. Estelle was good to me, and got me to try and learn something, and I guess you know the chance Mr. Cunningham is giving me.

"So I can't say much or ask anything. But I want you to know how much I want you, and how I hope some day I can have the right to ask you something."

She got up and stood before me, and the frightened look had gone.

"Clem," she said, "I'm very young. I've just come out, you know. But I'm not too young to know what love is. If I wasn't very sure I know, I wouldn't have let you say anything. But I am sure. I love you. And I think I've loved you since that same day at Miss Young's. And I shall always love you."

Then she smiled, a timid smile, yet determined, and said: "And even if you haven't asked me, I'm going to answer you, and the answer is, yes—some day. I've thought it all out, and I think it's much more wonderful for both of us to know about it now and be sure of each other."

Before I knew it, she tiptoed part of the way and drew my face down the rest and kissed me, too quickly, and ran around the big chair. After much begging, she permitted another caress—across the chair.

Then we sat before the fire, silent awhile, and Estelle came in. She paused for just a moment and looked at us. She understood at once, and kissed Carol very tenderly, then me, and used her handkerchief, and so did Carol.

## XXI

TRUTH is stranger than fiction, because in life you never know what is going to happen, while in fiction you can usually guess. The writer must make the things happen what the reader wants to happen, and the trick is to prolong the suspense and keep you guessing.

In telling my experiences, some of them might seem very strange indeed, if not in-

credible. For instance, see what happened to Carol and me.

The general notion with girls is to keep a man guessing so long that he is ready to commit suicide, and then at the last moment to fall limply in his arms. Also, a part of their tactics is to make the lover jealous—which, it seems to me, shows that they're not very wise.

Bert says jealousy is only a poker; it'll stir up the fire, but won't add an ounce of fuel. You'll get more blaze, but it can't last long.

Now, I had loved Carol with all my heart and without reasoning. And if anything could have added to my love for her, it was her frankness and courage in confessing that she loved me.

Mr. Cunningham, when he arrived and Estelle had told him all about it, came straight to Carol and me and showed how pleased he was. He invented plans that would take the three of us away from the others, which pleased me a lot, and Carol, too.

He had changed his mind about bringing Miss Walton up for Sunday, and returned to the city instead. I drove him to the station, and while we were waiting he said only two things.

One was that I had won more in a minute than he had gained in a lifetime. The other was: "I'm pleased that you have sent her flowers every morning. And if I ever hear of you missing one day, I'll disown you!"

During the rest of the week, Carol and I were not together much, but our understanding became known, as such things will. It was the eternal congratulations that kept us apart.

But each night we had a few minutes in Estelle's room, and began telling each other the story of our youthful lives.

No part of my story was harder to tell than that relating to those first months in New York, when I considered myself a sheik. I'm older now, and I do not think women love sheiks themselves, but only the idea.

Bert says a sheik is not a sheik outside of his tent—and he may not be much of a one inside it.

Of course Chicago couldn't hold Farley very long, although he should have felt at home there. Bert says Chicago, and not New York, is the American capital of



crookdom, the great modern city of criminal refuge.

At any rate, the handsome crook deserted the Western front for the quieter sector of Hell's Kitchen in New York. On the last day of Estelle's house party he telephoned Lola, having traced her through the Lane household.

This was during luncheon, and she was absent four or five minutes. Upon her return, arising to assist her, I saw a strange expression in her eyes. I knew at once that Farley was in town.

Two others, seated opposite, had formed the same opinion, Bert and my own Carol. And while Lola, after due apology, was making preparations to catch the first train, it was Carol who supplied the wisdom which both Bert and I lacked.

"Mr. Green," she said, "only the other day I heard you say that you do not have to let people hang themselves—they will do it in spite of you. I think that is exactly what this Farley will do. When he telephoned Lola he soon discovered she had not been told anything. He knows he can't see her openly any more, so there's only one thing left for him to do—try to induce her to marry him secretly."

Carol paused for breath.

"Mr. Green, when he makes that proposal to Lola Lane, that is the time when he will—"

"Hang himself," I supplied as she hesitated to repeat the expression.

"Bert," I said, "Carol is right. When Lola refuses, then she'll see the real Farley. He'll forget himself, as any crook will, when his game is blocked."

Bert could say nothing. His judgment told him that this was good reasoning, and that, as Carol pointed out, in no way could Lola be more thoroughly disillusioned than by Farley himself.

Estelle had suggested that some one, preferably Carol, should be at Lola's when she returned home. Of course I agreed to this.

Dr. Lane was expecting us, for on the way in I had telephoned from Garden City. Then I drove to Royal's office to tell him of Farley's return.

I had scarcely finished my story when the telephone rang. Farley had indeed overreached himself.

Moreover, in spite of his disguise, two days later he was caught in one of his favorite hang-outs. But of course he was

soon out on bail. It's even easier in New York than Chicago.

After receiving Dr. Lane's welcome message, Royal, Mr. Chase, and I hastened to the Long Island station to meet the incoming members of Estelle's party. Mr. Cunningham, who was to be the party's dinner host, had already arrived, and a moment later Jimmy Brewster appeared. I had not seen him since Carol's sweet acceptance.

"Clem," Jimmy said, as he took my hand, "I wouldn't telephone because I did not want to subtract from the pleasure of this moment, when I greet you as my *brother*. That's what I meant by my card, which said: 'Be patient.' I meant my little sister—not your car!"

## XXII

My night nurse says that I am on the way up. She must mean that I was pretty far down in the valley, for I am still very weak.

But I can think better than I ever could before. After the worst of the pain has passed, a sick bed does to your mind what field glasses do to your eyes.

The nurse, who is writing down what I say, just suggested that the right way to tell about an operation is to begin with the cause.

But first I'll introduce her; she is Miss Driscoll, and if I was a well man, and not engaged to another girl, I would fight a duel with the young house doctor who takes her out.

Well, I had driven Carol to an entertainment at a West Side settlement house in which she was interested. As I was about to help her into the car, after the performance, a bullet whistled past my ear.

The shot came from inside a taxi that had drawn up behind us. The engine was running, and the driver was purposely making the gas explode in the muffler so that it all sounded alike.

The bullet missed my darling, too, thank God. I also thank Him for the presence of mind that He gave me.

To rush toward the gunman—who was Farley—would leave Carol exposed to harm, so there was only one thing to do. My body is big and tough, and a bullet that would kill her might only wound me. I instantly caught Carol up and ran directly away from the taxi.

Two additional shots went wild, but

three did not. I set my dearest girl on her feet, and then all sight and sound ceased for me.

But I saw Carol again before I recognized any one else. It was when I first came out of the ether—reacted, the nurse calls it.

"You are going to live, Clem," my darling said. "I shall not let you die. If you try to go through the door of death, you will find me there, barring the way. Do you understand?"

I did. That is why I clung to life while a very great surgeon gloomily knit his brows. Mr. Cunningham hired him.

I can do my own writing now, and I am going to wind up this autobiography. All my time hereafter will be taken up by the printed words that other and bigger and better men have written.

Lola Lane and Bert Green, my friend, are engaged to be married. He says he got her on the rebound, but that it is a safe catch. His rival, Farley, is doing a long term for his marksmanship at me.

Carol and I are to become one and the same family name as soon as I look more like a bridegroom and less like an anatomical study. But she isn't to be known as Mrs. Cooley.

Mr. Cunningham has asked me to take his name, and I agreed.

And here at last is a published romance that does not end on a clinch between the heroine and the hero. Please pardon the lack of a close-up, and accept instead the following paragraph:

Dutch is driving Mr. Cunningham's car. That old night hawk knows the streets of New York better than a Scotchman knows his own pocketbook.

THE END

### REVELRY BY NIGHT

You did not see, you did not hear  
My shadow pass you by;  
In sweet concord I moved with shades  
Born of a lowering sky.

Within soft lights which you call night  
I mingled with warm rain;  
We beat with phantom fingers white  
Against your window pane.  
We splashed each fevered, thirsting flower  
Which lifted lips to cool;  
We sank below to stillest depths  
Within your garden pool.

I mingled with a gust of wind  
Which kissed your very cheek,  
And, warm still with the touch of you,  
We scaled a frosty peak;  
We brushed aside an airy cloud  
And tipped a half grown moon;  
Then laughed to see a young morn's star  
Peep in your darkened room.

You did not see, you did not hear  
My shadow pass you by;  
I reveled with a storm last night,  
And cleared a morning sky!

*Dorothy West*